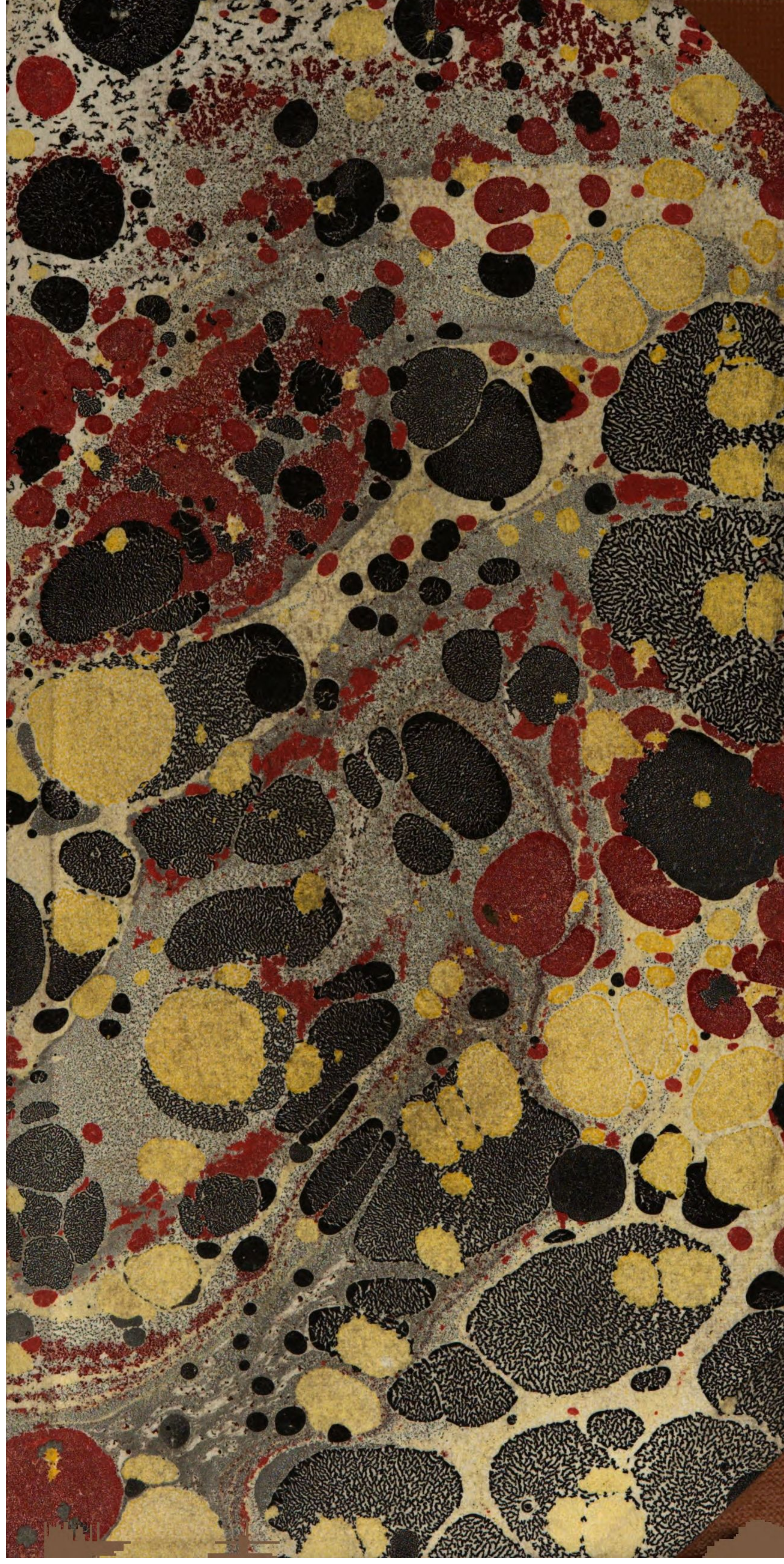
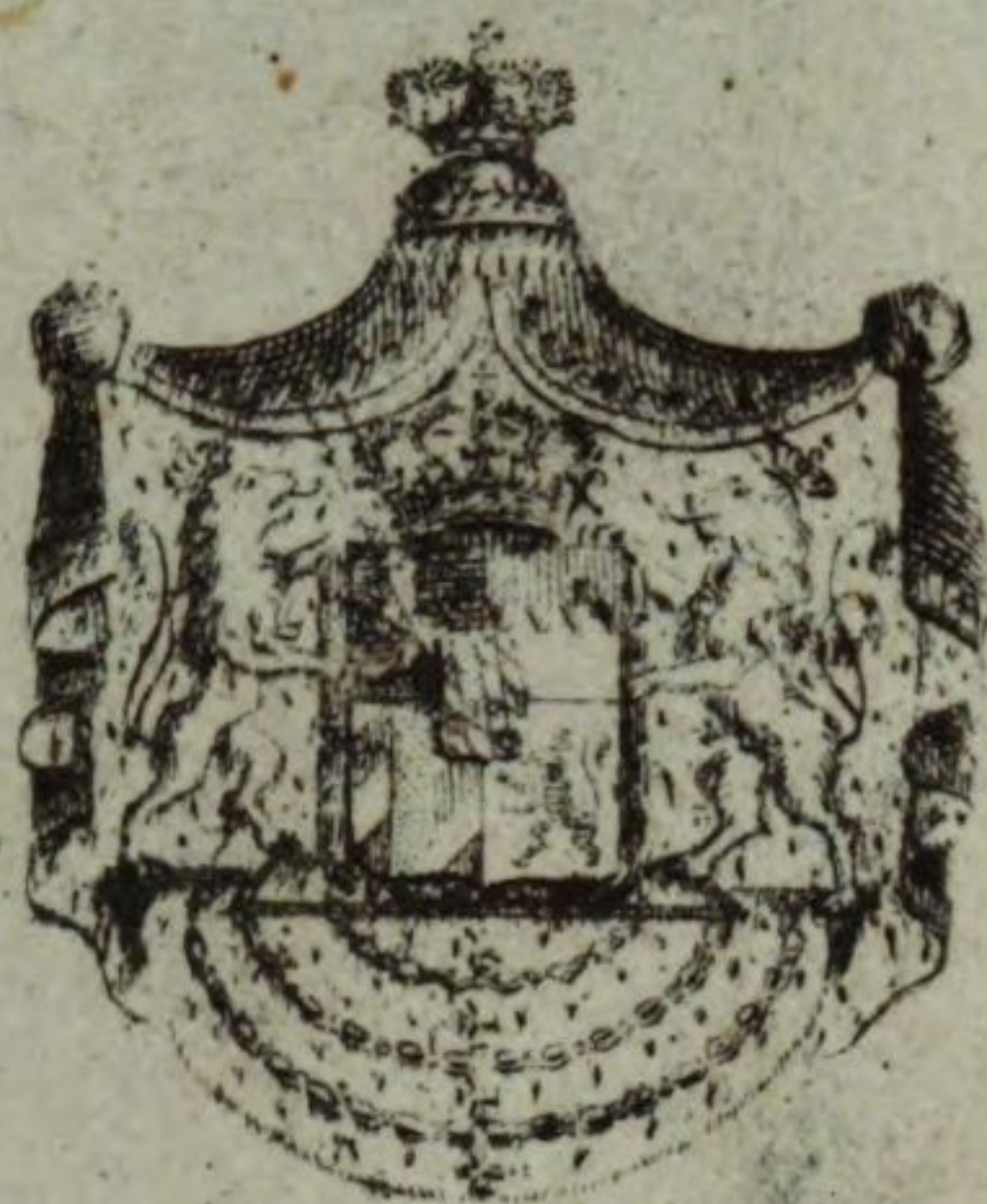




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THE BELLE OF A SEASON.

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OF ANCIENT AND MODERN

BRITISH AUTHORS.

—
VOL. CCLXII.

THE GOVERNESS,

AND

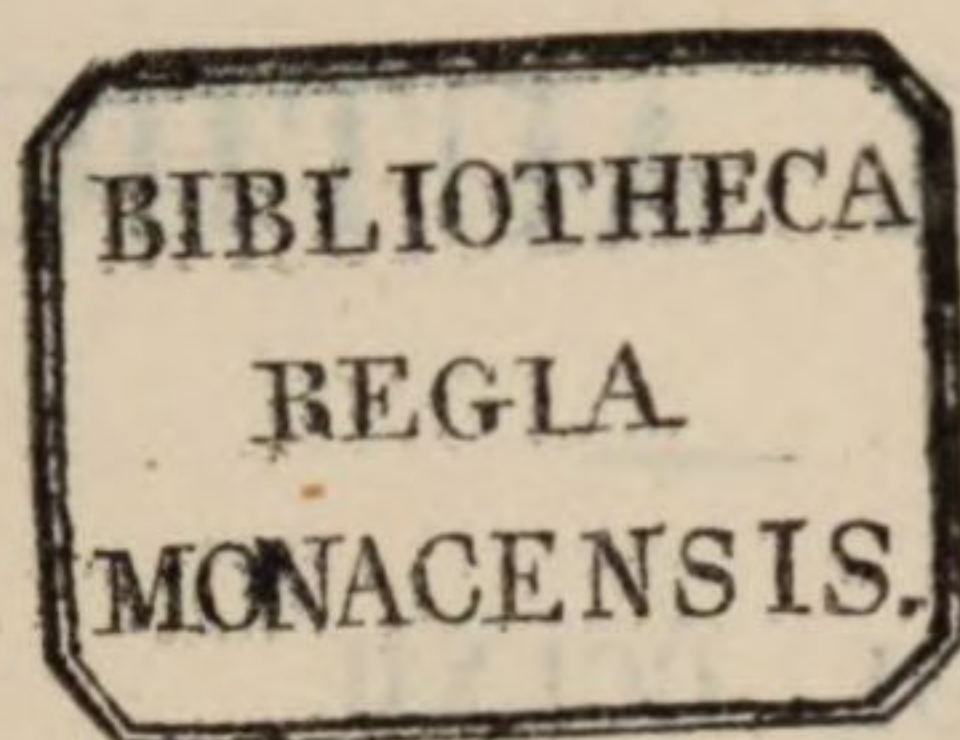
THE BELLE OF A SEASON.

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THE GOVERNESS,

AND

THE BELLE OF A SEASON.

BY

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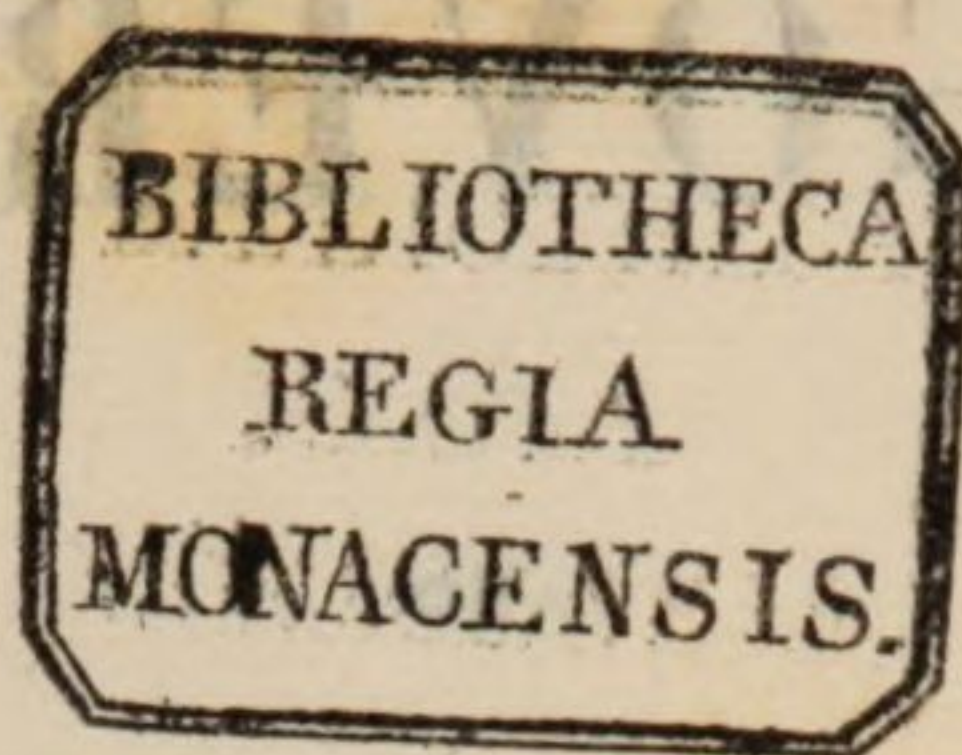
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AND 9, RUE DU COQ, NEAR THE LOUVRE.

SOLD ALSO BY AMYOT, RUE DE LA PAIX; TRUCHY, BOULEVARD DES ITALIENS; GIRARD FRÈRES,
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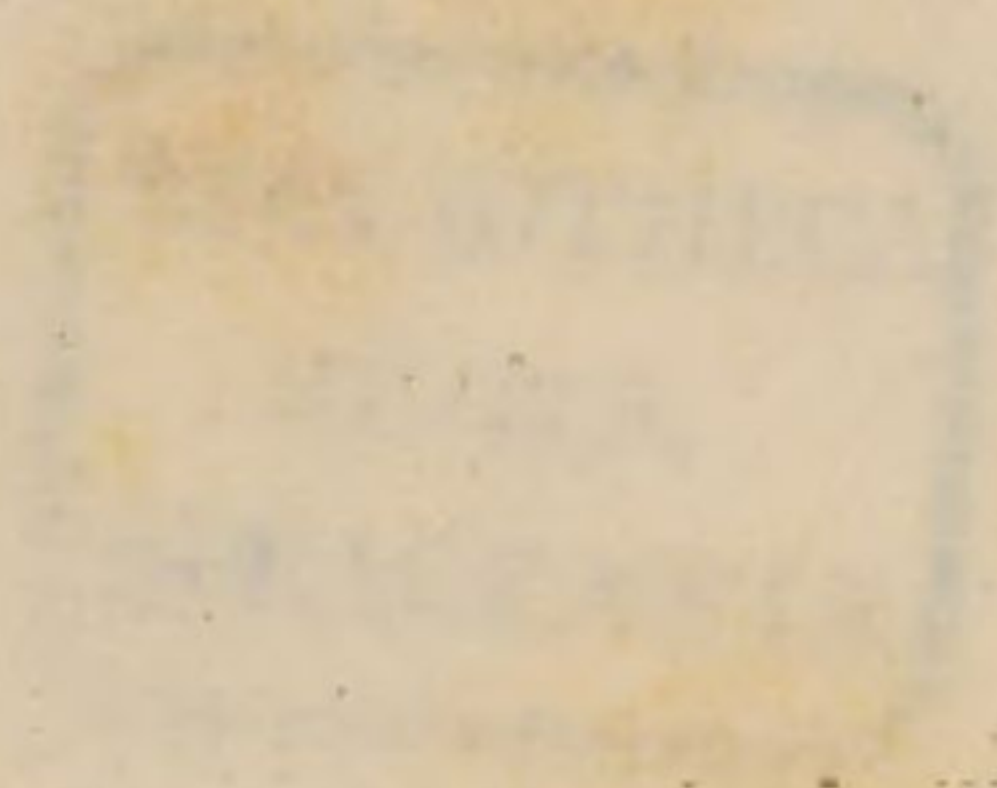
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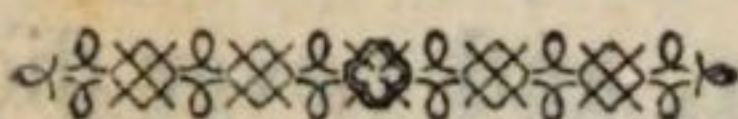
THE GOVERNESS.

THE GOVERNESS.



THE GOVERNMENT.

THE GOVERNESS.



“READ this advertisement, my dear Clara,” said Mrs. Waller to her niece; “perhaps it may suit you. I have only looked at the two first lines, so read it aloud.” Clara complied, and perused the following lines from the *Morning Post* :—

“Wanted, in a highly distinguished family, a person as governess, to undertake the education of three young ladies, of the ages of nine, seven, and five. She must be of a prepossessing appearance, of refined manners, and a perfect musician. She is required to instruct her pupils in French, Italian, and English, geography and the use of the globes, with music, drawing, and dancing; in all which branches of education she is expected to be a proficient. Equanimity of temper and cheerfulness of disposition, joined to uninterrupted health, are indispensable requisites. She must understand cutting out and making the children’s dresses. Salary twenty-five guineas a-year. Address No. —, Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, between the hours of two and four.”

“Twenty-five guineas a-year!” exclaimed Mrs. Waller, as her niece laid down the paper; “and a list of accomplishments, with moral and physical perfections, required, that never yet fell to the lot of one human being. How much money and time must have been spent to acquire even half such accomplishments, and yet for all these, the wages of a lady’s maid are offered. Oh! my poor Clara, this will never do.”

“And yet, dear aunt, this advertisement is scarcely more unreasonable than the generality,” replied Clara, “in which so much is required, and so little is to be given. Let me go to Brook Street to-morrow; for though I cannot flatter myself that I possess even a quarter of the requisites stated, still I might suit, and I am patient, which goes a great way towards satisfying people.”

“But twenty-five guineas a-year, my child, are quite inadequate to defray your personal expenses.”

“It is not a large sum, to be sure,” said Clara, trying to smile; “but with economy I may make it answer.”

It was settled, though not without considerable reluctance on the part of Mrs. Waller, that her niece should go to Brook Street the following day, and never did this excellent woman lament her own poverty so deeply as now, when it compelled her to consent to such a measure.

Clara Mordaunt was the only child and orphan of a merchant, whose unsuccessful speculations had led to bankruptcy and—suicide. Brought up in affluence, large sums had been expended in her education, and, being gifted with great natural abilities, her proficiency satisfied not only her doting father, but surprised the professors who instructed her. Mr. Mordaunt was considered to be immensely rich, and at one period was so, until the demon Avarice urged him to risk the wealth he possessed, in the hope of acquiring more. The success that crowned his first speculations led to still more venturous ones, until ruin and disgrace threatened him, and he fled from them to—death, leaving his orphan daughter wholly dependent on her aunt, Mrs. Waller, the widow of a colonel, with only the small pension allowed her as such.

The summer friends, who had flocked round the hospitable board of Mr. Mordaunt during his prosperity, were the first to censure his profusion, now that they could no longer profit by it; they discovered a thousand faults in him whom they had so lately flattered, until, tired of the subject, they agreed that his ruin and death, with the horrid manner of it, were such shocking incidents, that it made them uncomfortable to think of him, and, consequently, in ceasing to remember the father, they also forgot his child.

Mrs. Waller had been schooled in adversity, and had acquired all the wisdom of experience, without any of the bitterness that is but too apt to accompany it. She had taught her niece, during her days of prosperity, to estimate at their just value the professions of admiration and friendship which were heaped upon her, so that when poverty overtook Clara, it found her not unprepared for some of the worst evils it inflicts—the desertion of those who had passed for friends. She was pensive, but resigned, being determined to exert every means that her finished education afforded her, of earning an

honourable subsistence, rather than encroach on the narrow pittance of her aunt. Clara Mordaunt was now in her twentieth year, though she might have passed for seventeen, from the juvenile lightness of her figure, and the delicate beauty and timid bashfulness of her face. She was singularly lovely, without being strictly regular in features, and possessed a most distinguished air.

Such was the person who, accompanied by her aunt, with a trembling hand knocked at the door of No. —, in Brook Street, and inquired if Mrs. Williamson was at home. An impudent stare from the porter, which brought blushes to her cheek, met this interrogation, and—"Are you the person that is comed after the governess's place?" was the answer. Mrs. Waller could scarcely repress her indignation, but Clara answered in the affirmative; on which they were told to sit down in the hall, while the surly Cerberus rang the bell, and desired the footman who answered it to acquaint his mistress that "a young woman was comed after the sitivation of governess."

"I can tell you, miss, that you will have a precious hard place, if you suits," said the porter; "for our children be the very dickens for mischief. Lord help us! if ye could but know how they sarved the young woman as is just left—why, hang me, if they did not worry her worse nor ever a cat did a rat!"

"At this moment the footman returned to announce that his lady would receive Miss Mordaunt, and interrupted the loquacious porter in his disclosures. Mrs. Waller and her niece were shown into the boudoir, where reclining on a sofa, her head supported by one hand, while the other held a *flacon* of salts, they found the mistress of the mansion, who pointed to them to be seated, and then explained that she was suffering from a nervous headach, which almost precluded her from speaking. Clara proposed returning another day, but Mrs. Williamson said, that now she had been interrupted, it was better to come to the point.

"I conclude that you are mistress of all the accomplishments required, as stated in the advertisement," continued that lady; "if so, I have only to add that, provided you give me a proper reference as to character and abilities, I have no objection to engage you, although you are younger than I could have wished."

Mrs. Waller said, that she was the person to be referred to for the abilities of Miss Mordaunt, who was her niece.

“But is there no other person—I mean, is there no lady unconnected with this young person to whom I can refer?” asked the unfeeling Mrs. Williamson; “for it is not customary to take people into one’s employment (service, she was going to say) solely on the recommendation of their near relations.”

“I can give you references to many ladies for *my* respectability, madam,” replied Mrs. Waller, while the blood rushed to her usually pale cheek, “but as my niece has never been out of her own family before, her abilities will be best judged of by a trial.”

“Do you live in London?” asked Mrs. Williamson, “and in what part of the town?”

“I reside at Kensington, madam,” was the answer.

“I only inquired,” continued Mrs. Williamson, “because I have an objection to my governess’s receiving her relations or friends, while she is in my establishment. I was bored to death by the last governess’s family, who were continually coming to inquire for her; and though I did not permit them to see her, still it was very inconvenient to have those sort of people knocking at the door, perhaps at the same moment that the carriages of my visitors stopped there.”

“Am I to understand, madam, that I am to be totally prohibited from seeing my niece?” asked Mrs. Waller.

“Oh, no! I only mean,” replied Mrs. Williamson, “that I have an objection to your coming more than once a-month; and when you do come, I should wish your visit to be made before I am up, as I shall require Miss Mordaunt to be always ready to come and read to me when I feel disposed.”

Mrs. Waller looked several times at her niece during this interview, to indicate her desire of declining the situation, but Clara gave her such imploring looks that she forbore doing so, and having given a reference to Lady Walsingham, and left their address, they took leave of Mrs. Williamson, little impressed in her favour.

On descending to the hall the loquacious porter was again disposed to communicate to them his opinion of the discomforts of “the situation,” as he termed it, but they hurried away, leaving him muttering that “the most of them there governesses were as proud and conceited as if they were ladies, though, after all, they were no better than servants, for all they giv’d themselves such airs.”

“I cannot bear, my dear child,” said Mrs. Waller, “that

you should enter a family where the mistress seems to offer so little assurance of making your residence in it comfortable."

"We must not be alarmed by appearances, my dear aunt; do let me try it for a month, and if I find it too uncomfortable to be borne, I can then give it up. You are always on the spot, ready to receive me, and this is such a blessing, that it gives me courage to undertake what otherwise I might shrink from."

"But can we not wait until some more promising situation offers?" asked the aunt anxiously.

"Alas! dear aunt, you forget how many months I have already waited, at how many doors we have knocked, and by how many ladies I have been rejected. Do you not remember the severity with which my youth, nay, even my want of ugliness, has been commented upon, as if youth and a passable appearance were sins of deep dye. Depend on it, we may wait months, ay, even years, before what your affectionate heart would consider a tolerable home may offer; so it is wiser, if not more agreeable, to take advantage of the present occasion of beginning a life of dependence, determined as I am to add as little as possible to its discomforts by unavailing regrets or murmurs."

In three days after, a note was brought from Mrs. Williamson, stating, that as the reference to Lady Walsingham had been satisfactory, she wished Miss Mordaunt to enter her family as soon as possible.

Mrs. Waller lamented that her niece was determined on leaving her, though her scanty means were little calculated to the additional expense which her residence would impose, while Clara was thankful that the means of honourable subsistence was thus afforded to her, and that she should no longer be compelled to diminish the already too small income of her aunt.

On the death of her father Clara had given up to the creditors every ornament of value which she possessed; her wardrobe was also surrendered to them, and nothing reserved except a few of the plainest and most simple of her clothes. She now commenced her preparations for entering her new abode, and as she packed up her limited wardrobe into the small trunk provided by her aunt, many a thought of the past returned to grieve her, in spite of all her good resolutions to think only of the future.

When they sat down to tea the evening that was to be the last of their residence together, Mrs. Waller, while a tear stole down her cheek, entreated her niece to promise her, that if, as she feared would be the case, she found her new situation too uncomfortable, she would return to her.

“You are so patient, my precious child,” said she, “that I fear you will submit without a murmur to what, with a little more spirit, you might repel. Patience is, I admit, an admirable thing, but it may be carried too far, and from what I saw of Mrs. Williamson, I fear she is one who would be more likely to abuse than value it. Exact proper conduct from those around you, and do not submit to ill-treatment. Remember that you have always a home with me, and though it is but an humble one, it shall always welcome you with delight.”

“It is the knowledge of this that gives me courage to leave you, dear aunt, and to encounter those who, perhaps, it will be difficult to please. Could I but see you more frequently—yet let me not repine; shall I not be near you, though we meet not? and have I not the comfort, and it is a great one, of knowing that a few hours may always bring me a letter from you?”

Though Clara Mordaunt tried to assume an air of cheerfulness in the presence of her aunt, and almost succeeded, as far as appearances went, many and bitter were the feelings that filled her mind as she reflected that this would be the last night she should sleep beneath the same roof with her who had been from infancy as a mother to her. She gazed around on the simple household objects that she had been from childhood accustomed to see, for Mrs. Waller, though an inmate in the splendid mansion of Mr. Mordaunt, and surrounded by the luxurious furniture with which it was filled, had carefully treasured her own plain but useful domestic furniture, endeared to her by having belonged to the husband she had lost, and each and all were like old familiar friends to Clara. Often, as her eye fell on the pale and care-worn cheek of her aunt, did she remember with a pang the severe attacks of spasms to which Mrs. Waller was subject, and ask herself the question, “Who now will watch by her couch, and administer her medicine?”

While all this was passing in the mind of Clara, Mrs. Waller was thinking only of the discomforts to which her beloved niece would be exposed: she thought not of the heavy priva-

tion the loss of her niece's society would be to her, accustomed as she had been for so many years to its enjoyment. "Were she going among those who would love and cherish her," thought Mrs. Waller, "I could bear this separation." She looked at the beautiful countenance of Clara, and its pensive yet angelic expression re-assured her, by suggesting the hope that such a face could not fail to excite affection.

It was a touching sight to behold these two admirable women, subduing every selfish regret, and alive only to the happiness of each other, while every endeavour was used to conceal the grief that was preying on both.

When they parted for the night, and the tremulous lips of Mrs. Waller pressed the brow of her niece, tears started to the eyes of both at the recollection that this was the last night their accustomed greeting would take place.

"Your little white bed shall be always kept ready, my own Clara," sobbed Mrs. Waller, "and I shall kiss its pillow when I can no longer press this fair and smooth forehead. This portrait," looking at the miniature of her niece which hung over the mantel-piece, "no longer satisfies me. It has your sweet pensive air, my child, but those costly pearls on the head, and that rich ornament that clasps them, remind me too painfully of other times. This is the portrait of the rich heiress, and not of the poor governess;" and a passion of tears interrupted Mrs. Waller's words, during which her niece was fondly pressed to her maternal bosom.

Clara struggled to subdue her own feelings, keenly excited as they were by this recurrence to the past. When that portrait had been painted, only fifteen months before, she was considered as the heiress to immense wealth. She presided at the head of a large establishment,—in one of those splendid mansions of the merchant princes, only now to be found in London, realizing all that we read of the Medici, when, at Florence, commerce and a love of the fine arts were, as they should ever be, united. She was the idolized daughter of a father to whom she was fondly attached, and who was never so happy as when administering to her enjoyment. At his desire, abundance of the finest oriental pearls bound her brow, and a turquoise of great value clasped them, when she sat for this miniature; for with some portion of that ostentation which appertains to the *parvenu*, the rich merchant wished his wealth to be evident even in the picture of his daughter. Well did

Clara remember his saying, when he examined it, that the painter had given her as melancholy a look as if she were a poor dependent instead of a rich heiress, and that a brow decked with pearls worth thousands should look less clouded. All these reflections now recurred to memory, and it was not without many an effort that she checked the tears that rose to her eyes; but she did check them, for well she knew that the sight of her sorrow would increase that of her aunt.

The sun shone bright and joyously on the morning that Clara was to leave her humble home. The flowers in the little balcony never looked so fresh and gaily tinted as now that she was bidding them farewell; and the birds, to which she had been accustomed to throw the crumbs of bread after breakfast, hopped fearlessly amongst them, sending forth their cheerful carols. "How happy could I be, even in this humble abode," thought Clara, "could I remain without encroaching on the too limited income of my aunt; but it may not be, and it is vain to repine;" yet, in spite of this wise reflection, a deep sadness filled her heart as her eyes wandered around on each object of the simple but comfortable little apartment.

Her aunt accompanied her in a hackney coach to Brook Street, and on arriving at the door, the driver's loud double knock was answered by a surly remonstrance from the porter, who observed that "a *single* knock, or a ring at the bell, would have been more *properer* for sich like folk." Mrs. Waller's indignation was excited by this new impertinence, but Clara's appeal to her for forbearance was not disregarded. When they descended from the coach, Clara requested that her trunk might be brought from it and conveyed to her room. The hackney coachman placed it in the hall, and, having received his fare, was on the point of withdrawing, when the porter, looking contemptuously at the trunk, demanded "who was to take that there box up stairs?"

"Why, for the matter of that, I don't much mind if I takes it myself," said the coachman, gratified by the readiness with which an over-charge of a shilling in his fare had been allowed to pass unquestioned.

"*You* go up the best stairs with your dirty shoes! I should like to know what missus would say to sich a thing," replied the porter.

“Well then, take it yourself,” said coachee; “it’s no great weight after all; and I suppose as how you can’t expect as miss or the old lady can take it.”

Mrs. Waller having put half-a-crown into the hand of Cerberus, he quickly changed his tone, and said that “he would see to the trunk’s being taken up stairs in a jiffey,” and having rung for a footman, he desired him to show miss her room.

On the fourth storey, at which they arrived out of breath, they were shown into a large apartment at the back of the house, the windows of which commanded a view of the roofs and chimneys of the adjacent ones, enlivened by occasional lines drawn across the parapets, on which waved sundry draperies of various colours, testifying the extent of the wardrobes, as well as washing propensities of the housemaids in the vicinity. The room was scantily and meanly furnished; four straight-backed chairs were placed round a large table covered with a green cloth, on which many a stain of ink attested the carelessness, if not the industry, of the occupants of the chamber. Another large table, placed against the wall, was piled with books, slates, drawing-paper, pencils, and colours, and a piano-forte formed a pendant to it at the other side. Large maps were hung on the walls, all of them scribbled over with ink and pencil marks, and a cupboard graced the corner, filled with delf and glass of the commonest description for daily use. The carpet was stained all over, and the curtains had lost their pristine hue,—in short, the apartment presented the most cheerless if not disgusting aspect, and, being due north, was deprived of all sunshine.

The heart of Mrs. Waller sank within her as she contemplated this comfortless room, and reflected that it was in it her niece, reared in the lap of luxury, and accustomed to all the elegancies of life, was to pass her hours. Clara guessed all that was passing in the mind of her aunt, and replied to it by saying, “I shall have no time for observing the discomforts of my apartment with three children to attend to.”

A large bed-room, with four beds, opened into the sitting-room, and Clara found with regret that even the comfort and privacy of a sleeping-apartment to herself was denied her. As Mrs. Waller looked at this cheerless chamber, memory recurred to the elegant one that her niece had been wont to occupy in Berkeley Square; and even the small but clean room, with its white curtains and little bed, appropriated to

her use at Kensington appeared luxurious in comparison with this.

"I won't come in—I tell you, I won't!" struck on the ears of both aunt and niece, in discordant tones, accompanied by sundry efforts of resistance, as if the action of the speaker was suited to the words.

"Fie, for shame! Miss Arabella—how naughty you be, not to go and see the new governess," was the rejoinder.

"I hate governesses, and won't see her!" was now screamed forth, as the nursery-maid endeavoured to compel Miss Arabella to enter the room. At this instant, two romping hoydens burst into the chamber, and, approaching Mrs. Waller, looked curiously in her face, and asked her if she was the new governess?

"No, young ladies, I am your governess," said Clara, while her aunt mentally thanked Providence that she was not.

"Oh! I am so glad," resumed Miss Laura, "for I hate ugly old women!"

Be it known to our readers that Mrs. Waller had been a beauty in her youth, and if she had a weakness, it was that of wishing to be still considered to retain the remains of her good looks. The speech of Miss Laura brought a blush of anger to her face, and Clara felt provoked at the rudeness that occasioned it. Miss Williamson, observing the effect produced by her sister's remark, assumed a dictatorial air, and said—"You are very ill-bred, Laura; you know that Miss Forster always told us, we were never to tell people they were ugly."

"But did she not also tell us that we were always to speak the truth?" returned Miss Laura, with a triumphant look. "Now this old woman is ugly, and therefore——"

"Be silent, Miss Laura," said Clara, which command was received with sullen looks and muttered sentences by the young lady.

While this scene was taking place, Miss Arabella continued screaming and struggling outside the door, the nursemaid using all her efforts, both of hands and tongue, to force her to enter. Mrs. Williamson's maid now appeared, and with all the imperious airs of the unworthy of her class, informed Miss Mordaunt that "Mrs. Williamson was much surprised she allowed the young ladies to make such a noise, and desired it might cease immediately." Clara gave an appealing look to her aunt to retire, telling her in French that she would write

to her next day, and their parting embrace, and the few words that accompanied it, passed amidst a scene of contention and confusion, that neither aunt nor niece had ever before witnessed : the three young ladies, the waiting-woman, and the nursemaid, all speaking together.

Clara now approached the struggling Arabella, and stooping down, gently, but firmly desired her to enter the room. A violent slap on the face, which sent the blood to it, was the only answer made by the young vixen, and a peal of laughter from her sisters and the attendants followed the feat.

"I must request you to withdraw," said Clara, with dignity, to the *femme de chambre* and nursemaid.

"Marry come up!" said Mrs. Popkins, "well, if this isn't good! withdraw, indeed! why, I'd have you to know that I have been in the house before you, and, what's more, will be in the house after you; so I wouldn't advise you to give yourself no airs to me, for I'm not one as would stand 'em from nobody, not even from Mrs. Williamson herself;" and she flounced out of the room, shutting the door violently after her, a trick peculiar to vulgar people.

Clara felt confounded at the insolence of the *soubrette*, and the three young ladies tittered aloud, evidently pleased that the new governess had got what they called a lesson from Mrs. Popkins. The nursemaid advanced with a dirty book in her hand, and opening the cupboard, asked Clara to come and count over the crockery. This was a totally unexpected demand, and was made in a tone that implied more of command than entreaty; but ere it could be complied with, a summons from Mrs. Williamson called her from the apartment, and as she prepared to attend it, by arranging her hair, the nursemaid muttered that she "could not be responsible for the crockery no longer, now as miss was come; and if she would not count 'em over, and see how many was cracked, it was her own fault, and she'd have to pay for 'em when she was leaving the situation, which would not be long first, as no governess ever staid beyond their month." The hint of having to pay for breakage was not lost on Miss Laura, who, the moment an opportunity offered, broke some of the already scanty supply of delf and glass, that Miss Mordaunt might be forced to replace it, a pleasantry that drew from Mrs. Popkins, when she heard it, the observation, that "Miss Laura was very droll, and the cleverest of the family."

“I sent for you, Miss Mordaunt,” said Mrs. Williamson, as she entered the dressing-room, scarcely vouchsafing a bow to the graceful curtsy of Clara, “that you might read to me while Popkins is combing and brushing my hair; but first let me ask you, how can you permit the children to make such a noise; they have really nearly driven me distracted. This must not be; quiet is absolutely necessary for my delicate nerves, and you must secure it, or you will not suit me.”

A look of triumphant insolence from Popkins marked her satisfaction at the latter part of her mistress’s speech, and Clara felt her cheeks glow at the rudeness of the menial.

“The Letters of Ortis” was the book placed before Miss Mordaunt, and she was desired to commence at the sixtieth page, the late governess having, as Mrs. Williamson said, advanced as far as that.

“Probably you have never read the book,” continued that lady, to which Clara bowed assent.

“Indeed it is not suited to common minds, but to elevated ones it is a high treat,”—evidently implying that Clara’s was in the category of the first, and her own in the second.

Clara read on until she came to the following passage: “Wretched is the man who withdraws his heart from the counsels and condolence of friendship——”

“How true!” ejaculated Mrs. Williamson; “this I have experienced ever since I left off opening the secret recesses of my soul to Mrs. Nixon.”

A smile of satire stole over the lips of the *femme de chambre*, and Clara, who observed it, let her eyes again drop on the book, and continued the sentence which the ejaculation of Mrs. Williamson had interrupted.

“—who disdains the reciprocal sighs of compassion, and refuses the scanty help which the hand of his friend offers him——”

“And scanty enough they were,” again interrupted Mrs. Williamson, “for excepting sighing when I sighed, and pitying me for the delicacy of my nerves, and deep sensibility of my heart, I know not that she gave me any consolation.” All this was said aloud, as if the speaker was wholly unconscious of the presence of any listener.

Clara resumed reading,—“But, indeed, a thousand times more wretched is he who confides in the friendship of the rich!”——

“There I differ with him,” said Mrs. Williamson, “for I know by experience the danger of confiding in the poor, who always take liberties the moment they are in possession of a secret. But go on, Miss Mordaunt ; you left off at the rich.”

“—and presuming virtue to dwell in one who was never unfortunate, receives that advantage, which he must afterwards discount with an equal portion of honesty.”——

“Discount and honesty—what low language !” said Mrs. Williamson, “quite like a tradesman’s style. Faugh ! I hate such words.”

“The prosperous ally themselves with misfortune, only with a view to purchase gratitude——”

“To be sure,” said Mrs. Williamson, “and they generally pay pretty dear for it.”

“—and tyrannize over virtue. Man, eager to oppress, profits from the caprices of fortune, in order to acquire a right to superior power.”——

“Yes,” said Mrs. Williamson, “just as Mr. Larkins intrigued to get himself elected Lord Mayor, without any other claim than his fortune.”

Clara felt perfectly astonished at the personal applications that the matter-of-fact Mrs. Williamson was making to the general reflections of Ugo Foscolo, and could scarcely repress a smile as she continued to read the sentences rendered disjointed by the perpetual interruptions of that lady.

“The unfortunate alone can redress the wrongs of fate”——

“Then why are they continually going before the Lord Mayor and the magistrates ? Who are the fortunate ?” asked Mrs. Williamson ; “really this Italian knows very little of life.”

Clara resumed,—“by reciprocally comforting each other ; but he who has obtained a seat at the rich man’s table, soon, although too late, discovers,—

“Come sa^{se} di sale
Lo pane altrui.”

“What’s that,” asked Mrs. Williamson.

“It is a quotation from Dante,” replied Clara, and means

“How bitter tastes
The bread of others.”

“Why, the man must be a fool,” said the lady. “I get as good bread at the houses where I dine as at home ; that is to

say, generally speaking : to be sure, Lady Wilcox always has stale bread, and Mrs. Bouden's is not the best, but in the other houses it is equally good. How you pull my hair !" turning to her *femme-de-chambre*, "and bless me, Popkins ! my curls don't fall a bit like Manon L'Escault's."

"Why, ma'am, you told me you wished to be coiffre-à-la-Ninon d'Longcloathes, and now you say Manon Lessgo."

Mrs. Williamson grew red with anger at the observation of her *femme-de-chambre*, and the tone in which it was made, and insisted on the hair being undressed, to the evident discomposure of the *soubrette*, who tossed about the combs and hair-pins with angry violence.

"Pray, Miss Mordaunt, which of the two French ladies, Ninon de Longcloaths, or Manon Lessgo was the most fashionable?—both I know were in high favour with Louis XVIII."

Miss Mordaunt was about to inform her that Ninon de L'Enclos and Manon L'Escaut lived in the time of Louis XIV., when a violent noise, as of the upsetting of furniture, followed by loud screams, excited the terror of Mrs. Williamson, who threw herself on the sofa, calling loudly for her salts, and commanded her to go and see what had happened.

Clara found the three young ladies with torn frocks and dishevelled hair, uttering piercing shrieks, and mutually reproaching each other. The nursery dinner, which had been brought up on a tray, had been left with its tin covers on the table, awaiting the return of Miss Mordaunt. The attendant had withdrawn for a few minutes, and the young ladies, becoming impatient, had commenced operations on the roast leg of mutton. The two younger ones had mounted on the table, which, being in a crazy state, had given way, throwing its contents over Miss Williamson, and pitching her sisters, covered with gravy and crushed vegetables, on the floor, with sundry bruises and scratches on their persons.

"Speak to Arabella ; it was all her fault !" cried Miss Williamson.

"No, no !" vociferated Arabella, "it was all sisters' fault, who kept pulling the mutton, and putting their bread in the gravy, and would not give me any until I climbed on the table to get some, and then naughty Laura would get up too ; and then she pushed me, and I pushed her, and then—oh, my hand ! my poor hand !" holding up her little chubby fingers, from which a sanguine stream was mingling itself with the

gravy and cauliflowers with which they were covered. While Miss Mordaunt assisted the young ladies to rise, and disembarass themselves from their robes, reeking with grease, Mrs. Popkins arrived, to state that her lady felt much surprise at Miss Mordaunt's allowing the young ladies to continue making such a noise, which had brought on an attack of nerves, and rendered her unfit to leave her chamber. A malicious smile was on the face of Mrs. Popkins, during the reiterated entreaties of Miss Mordaunt to the young ladies to be quiet; they continuing to sob and mutter reproaches, mingled with complaints of hunger. Popkins stood with perfect *nonchalance*, while Miss Mordaunt alternately wiped the faces, necks, and hands of her disconsolate pupils; the attendant of the nursery being occupied with collecting the broken dishes, plates, and mugs, and mopping the gravy from the carpet.

"I want my dinner, I must have my dinner. Oh! my poor hand—I must have my dinner," sobbed Miss Arabella.

"Why, miss, you would not go for to eat it in this mess?" said Betsey, the attendant. "I'll take it down to cook, who will wash it clean in a jiffey, and then you can have your dinner."

"Well, I'm sure as how I pities people as have to look arter children," said Popkins, as she flung out of the room, casting a look of contempt at Clara.

"Yes, you may pity," said Betsey, (first looking to see that she was out of hearing, "but I'm sure you never helps 'em.")

The gentleness and good nature with which Miss Mordaunt had performed the necessary ablutions for her pupils seemed to have softened even their spoilt natures, and the cheerfulness with which it was done raised the goodwill of Betsey. Clara's own dress sustained sundry stains from its contact with the reeking frocks of the young ladies, and she requested them to remain quiet while she changed it. When she observed how totally spoilt was the neat silk robe, that half an hour before formed one of the best of her scanty wardrobe, she felt mortified; but this annoyance seemed so puerile, in comparison with the manifold others which she foresaw awaited her, that she dismissed the thought of it.

"I do love de new doverness," said Miss Arabella, between a sob and a smile.

"I like her, too," said Miss Laura, "for she does not speak as if she was scolding."

"And I think her a nice person," observed Miss Williamson.

When dinner again made its appearance, the three young ladies rushed to the table with impatience, each demanding to be helped.

"I am to be helped first," said Miss Williamson, "for I am the eldest."

"No, no," said Miss Arabella, "it is me, it is me, for I am the youngest."

"Well, as I am neither the eldest nor the youngest," said Miss Laura, saucily, "it ought to be me."

"Isn't it me, Miss Mordaunt?—isn't it me?" vociferated the three young ladies together.

The gentle firmness of Clara triumphed over the selfishness of her pupils, and she succeeded in establishing something like order at the dinner-table, though she felt unable to partake of the washed leg of mutton and bruised vegetables, to which however her pupils did ample justice. Having appeased her hunger with a little of the rice pudding, which had escaped the crash of the first course, Clara asked for a glass of water, upon which the three young ladies expressed their surprise.

"How very odd not to like beer," said Miss Williamson.

"I like beer very much, though not so well as wine."

"I love beer," lisped little Arabella, "'t is so dood."

"And I like beer better than any thing," said Miss Laura.

Betsey, the attendant, during this dialogue on the merits of beer, had entered the bed-room, and returned bearing a water-jug, from which she poured a discoloured liquid, more opaque than any that Clara had ever tasted, and whose tepid state was not to be wondered at, as it had been in the confined atmosphere of the bed-room since early morning.

"Could you not let me have a glass of fresh cool water?" asked Miss Mordaunt.

"I'll go and see, miss," answered Betsey civilly, "but I am afeard I can't get none better than this here, for the butler has got the key of the cistern where the purified water is kept, and he would be sulky if I troubled him."

"I say, Miss Mordaunt," asked Miss Laura, "why can't you drink this here water, or that there beer?"

"You must not use such expressions as this here, or that there, Miss Laura," replied Clara.

"And why not, pray?" saucily demanded the young lady.

"Betsey always says so, and you did not correct her."

"I am not Betsey's governess," replied Clara, "and servants are not expected to speak with the same correctness as young ladies, who receive a good education."

At this moment Betsey entered, bringing a glass of clear sparkling water. "There, miss," said she, "a nice cold glass; luckily Thomas, the under butler, had the key, and as he is always the most civillest man in the world, he gived me the water the minute as I asked for it; look how different this here be's, to that there water out of the bed-room."

"Betsey, you must not say that there, or this here," said Miss Laura dictatorially, "for the governess says it is very wrong, and that only servants speak so."

The colour rose to Betsey's cheek at this reproof. "I'm sorry I can't speak to please Miss Mordaunt," answered she sulkily, "to speak well is her business, and to work hard is mine; but I didn't expect as how she would go for to talk ill of me behind my back, 'specially when I was gone to fetch a glass of water to please her."

Clara felt perfectly confounded at this rebuke, and gently informed Betsey that she had not spoken ill of her.

"Why, did you not say," interrupted Miss Williamson pertly, "that servants were not expected to speak correctly, and that you were not come here to be Betsey's governess?"

"Well, I'm sure, for the matter of that," said Betsey sulkily, "I do n't want to have miss, nor nobody else, for my governess; and it will be time enough for miss to refuse when I axes her."

"Arabella, only listen to Betsey, how she still continues to say *axes*, instead of ask, though we have told her of it so manytimes."

"If you teaches *me* English, miss, mayhap I could teach *you* manners, for indeed you're not over purlite, and so Thomas often tells me."

"Be so good as to be silent, Betsey," said Clara, "and you, Miss Williamson, are not to correct Betsey."

"I am sure," replied Miss Williamson, growing red with passion, "I have as much right to correct her, as you have to correct me."

"And I'm sure," observed Betsey, bridling with rage, "your new governess won't correct you much, or let others correct you either, when she tells me to hold my tongue, only for just telling you for your good, as how Thomas says you are the most unpurlitest young lady at this side of Temple Bar;"

and so saying, Betsey flounced out of the room, evidently indignant at what she considered Miss Mordaunt's bad treatment of her, as she was heard muttering along the passage, that "some people were precious false to speak ill of other people when their backs were turned." Miss Williamson sulked the whole of the afternoon, and read her lessons so inaudibly, that Clara could scarcely hear her, and her sisters could not be kept quiet a moment.

Never had Clara passed such a day, and it required the exertion of all her fortitude to bear up against the *ennui* and disgust which this specimen of her situation, and the duties it imposed, inspired.

At eight o'clock a footman informed her that she was expected to conduct Miss Williamson to the dessert. This was a new and unforeseen annoyance, yet she concealed her sense of it; and having arranged the hair and robe of her elder pupil, leaving the second one crying aloud at not being permitted to accompany her sister, she descended to the *salle-à-manger*. The mingled odours of soup, fish, flesh, pine-apple, and melon, struck most disagreeably on her olfactory nerves, as did the blaze of several lamps on her optic ones, as she entered the dining-room. All eyes were turned on her with an undissembled stare of curiosity, that covered her with blushes. No gentleman moved to offer her a seat, and the servants waited the commands of their mistress to perform this service.

"You *may* sit down, Miss Mordaunt," said Mrs. Williamson, and instantly a servant placed a chair for her at the bottom of the table.

"Will you have a glass of wine?" asked a fat, red-faced, portly-looking man, at the bottom of the table, with a blue coat and white waistcoat, and bearing a sort of family likeness, in air and manner, as well as in dress, to the butler who stood behind his chair.

"No, I thank you," replied Clara.

"You had better," resumed he good-naturedly, "for a glass of this old Madeira will do you good; you look a little palish, and this wine, which has twice crossed the line, is an excellent stomachic."

"If Miss Mordaunt does not like wine, why should she be forced?" interrupted Mrs. Williamson, with a degree of asperity little calculated to encourage similar offers from her lord, but *not* master.

"I did not wish to force Miss Mordaunt, I'm sure," replied Mr. Williamson; "but seeing that she looks a little pale, I thought a glass of wine and a biscuit would do her good."

"Miss Mordaunt has eat no dinner," said her pupil, "and do you know, mamma, she does not like beer."

"We don't want to know what people like or don't like in the nursery," interrupted Mrs. Williamson angrily.

"Well now! as the young lady has ate no dinner, and only drank water, I must insist on her having a glass of wine and a biscuit," resumed the good-natured host; and, suiting the action to the word, he helped Clara to both.

She had now an opportunity of observing the persons assembled round the table, and a most heterogeneous mixture they formed. At the top presided the mistress of the mansion, attired in pink satin, not of a pale hue, trimmed with a profusion of blonde lace. A *parure* of emeralds, set in diamonds, graced her neck and arms, whose tint partook more of the rose than of the lily; and this *mélange* of red and green reminded the beholder of a radish. Artificial damask roses were twined in her tresses, which, "like angel visits, were few and far between;" but, that the flowers might not appear too simple, a large emerald set in diamonds was stuck in the centre of each rose. An Irish baron, whose pedigree was longer than his rental and better filled than his purse, filled the seat of honour next to the hostess; and, at her other hand, sat a Scots baronet, who partook not a *leetle* of the good things set before him. A lady in a jonquil satin dress, worn under a blonde lace, and decked in a suit of Brazil amethysts, with a lilac *béret* covering her flaxen locks, sat next the Hibernian Lord, and a dame, robed in Maria-Louisa blue satin, with her head, neck, and arms ornamented with topazes, guiltless of ever having basked in an orient sun, was placed beside the Scottish chief. Two plainly habited gentlemen, who talked continually about "the House," and two guardsmen, who talked as continually about Crocky's, came next; and a young man, fat and sleek, with shining hair, and diamond studs in his *chemise*, sat opposite to Clara, who was placed between the master of the house and an elderly man, with a most benign countenance, who politely offered her the fruit placed near him.

"I think, my Lady Thompson," said the Scots baronet, looking admiringly at the topazes of the lady he addressed,

"I recognize some of the produce of my ain land in your ladyship's ornaments."

"I don't know what you mean," replied the lady, brusquely.

"I mean," answered he, "that your ornaments are cairngohrms from Scotland, and that I am proud to see them worn by so fair a lady."

Unfortunately Lady Thompson, the widow of a city knight, was a dark brunette; consequently the allusion to her complexion by no means gratified her.

"You are mistaken, sir," replied she, angrily. "My ornaments are of *real* topaz, one of which is of more value than fifty of your dingy smokey cairngohrms, which are fit for nothing but seals."

"I must *deef*er a *leetle* with your ladyship on this point," observed the baronet, evidently piqued by her depreciation of the indigenous produce of his native land. "But her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch, her Grace the Duchess of Gordon, and her Grace the Duchess of Richmond, with many others that I could name, wear the cairngohrms, not only at our country balls, but in the presence of royalty, ay, even in their Majesties' presence, my lady."

"Well, I cannot say I admire their tastes," replied Lady Thompson, with a toss of her head; "and for my part, I prefer fine jewels, real diamonds, pearls, emeralds, rubies, and topazes, to such common low-priced ornaments as cairngohrms."

"I hope your ladyship does not include Irish diamonds in the gems you disapprove," said Lord Castledermot, "for they surely are very elegant, and I have seen them worn at balls at the castle, when her Excellency the Lady Lieutenant has not disdained to adorn herself with them."

"Probably because she had no *real* diamonds," said Lady Thompson.

"You don't main to say," resumed the Hibernian baron,—forgetting in his increasing warmth of temper, the usual affected pronunciation which led him to substitute *e*'s for *a*'s,—"you don't main to say that Irish diamonds are *false* stones!"

"I mean to say that if they were not, they would fetch a larger price than they do. The price—the price—is always the proof with me, whether a thing is false or true."

"Oh! that's a city way of judging," replied the Baron, red

with anger, "and I appeal to the present company to decide, if Irish diamonds are not real stones?"

"I never wear paste, and therefore am no judge," said the lady in yellow satin, with a toss of her head.

"Faith, then, if she does not wear paste, she eats it," whispered the Baron to his neighbour, "for she tucked in the *vol-au-vent* in famous style, I'll answer for it."

"I believe," said Mrs. Williamson, "that Irish diamonds are not paste."

"Then what are they, ma'am?" asked the lady in yellow.

"They are a natural production,—they are crystal—crystal, ma'am, like the decanters and glasses on the table," replied Mrs. Williamson, with a look of conscious superiority.

"That can't be," said the lady in yellow, "for I have seen decanters and glasses made, and *they* are not a natural production, I assure you."

"You have seen them shaped into their present form, and cut and polished," resumed Mrs. Williamson angrily; "but crystal (and I suppose you will not deny that these glasses and decanters which are diamond cut *are crystal*) is a natural production."

Each of the three ladies now became animated in the discussion. The dame of the jonquil robe declared, that *she* had a vase in crystal, set with precious stones, which had cost a hundred guineas, a fact that proved, as she asserted, that if crystal was mere glass, such a price would not be given, nor such a labour bestowed in ornamenting it.

"And I have a *bonbonnière*, ma'am, made of amethyst, the same as your necklace," retorted Mrs. Williamson; "the only difference being that my *bonbonnière* has got more white streaks in it."

"I dare say your box, or whatever you please to call it, is only Derbyshire spar," said the championess of amethyst.

"Derbyshire spar, indeed!" repeated Mrs. Williamson, becoming red with indignation; "I should be very sorry to wear such a vulgar common thing as Derbyshire spar. No, ma'am, my *bonbonnière* is amethyst, real amethyst, and cost seventy guineas;—did not it, Mr. W.?"

"I remember, my dear," replied Mr. Williamson, "that the jeweller told me that it was made of the root of the amethyst."

“Well, root and branch, are they not the same?” asked his wife angrily.

“I should think not,” replied the lady in yellow.

The pendule of the chimney-piece, striking at this moment, reminded the ladies that it was time to leave the gentlemen to enjoy that purely English custom of sitting over their wine in the *salle à manger*, and after sundry looks exchanged between her of the topaz and *la dame d'améthyste* with Mr. Williamson, they rose, and, marshalled by the hostess, went to the drawing-room.

“You may retire to your own apartment, Miss Mordaunt,” said Mrs. Williamson haughtily, when the dining-room door closed after them, and the polite curtsey of Clara to that lady and her guests, received no other notice than a rude stare from each and all, as they hurried up stairs, longing to express their opinions of her.

“What a very pretty governess you have got, Mrs. Williamson,” remarked Lady Thompson: “quite a beauty I declare; just such a face as one sees a crowd round, at the Exhibition at Somerset House in the season, or in one of the fashionable annuals.”

“Do you think it quite prudent,” asked Lady Hancock, “to have so handsome a person under your roof?”

“Well, I really see no such wonderful beauty in her,” said Mrs. Williamson.

“But have you never observed, my dear friend,” observed Lady Thompson, “that it is precisely the sort of woman *we* see no wonderful beauty in, that our husbands discover to possess a great deal?”

“Your ladyship is very right,” said Lady Hancock, looking mysterious. “I have seen such shocking things occur in families owing to pretty ladies’ maids, and handsome governesses, that I always recommend my married friends to beware of them.”

“It is now rather difficult to find a plain woman,” remarked Lady Thompson with a sigh, “for since vaccination has become so general, one no longer sees a pockmarked woman, except of a certain age.”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Lady Hancock; “and people have discovered such pommades for improving the hair, and dentifrices for whitening the teeth, that even the plain-featured look attractive.”

“A friend of mine,” resumed Lady Thompson, “has been obliged to insist on her maid wearing a cap, which she, being a French woman, strongly objected to; but really it was quite tiresome to see the profusion of black shining curls she sported, and to hear the comments the men made on them, whenever her mistress required her to appear in their presence.”

“And an acquaintance of mine,” said Lady Thompson, “was compelled to prohibit the governess from smiling, because she was always exhibiting her teeth.”

“Miss Mordaunt, however, will not require such a prohibition,” remarked Mrs. Williamson, “for I have not seen her smile once since she has been in my house.”

“But have you not observed, my dear friend,” said Lady Hancock, “that your serious sentimental young ladies often excite more attention, ay, and admiration too, by an air of melancholy, than by smiles?”

“It is but too true,” answered Lady Thompson, shaking her head; “men are so weak, that the moment they see a young woman look pensive, they directly imagine her interesting, and press her to have *this*, or take *that*, when she comes to dessert, just as if she were one of the company.”

Mrs. Williamson positively blushed with anger, for this last observation reminded her of her husband’s pressing Miss Mordaunt to eat a biscuit, and drink wine; a reminiscence that her friend well knew her speech was calculated to produce; and she firmly resolved to prohibit such attentions in future from her liege lord, who invariably yielded to her dictates with a shake of the head, and a shrug of the shoulders, uttering the favourite exclamation of all hen-pecked Benedicks, “any thing for a quiet life;” never recollecting, that every sacrifice of volition made to attain this desired end renders it more difficult to be acquired, as wives are never tired of demanding concessions which they know by experience they can enforce.

Clara was glad to find herself again in the chamber assigned to her and her charge, cheerless and uncomfortable as it was. Any thing was better than the supercilious regards of the ladies in the *salle à manger*, and the offensive stare of some of the men. This exhibition of herself, in her new and disagreeable position, was, in her estimation, the most mortifying part of it; and she sighed as she contemplated the probability

of its daily recurrence. Having undressed Miss Williamson—this service being a part of her duty—she hoped to pass at least a couple of hours in tranquillity. She took the flaring tallow candle, that sent forth a most unsavoury odour, into the sitting-room, and tried to beguile her sense of discomfort in reading a volume of Shakspeare. But even here she was doomed to be disturbed, for the snoring of her three pupils, in the adjoining room, was so audible as totally to interrupt her study; and joined to this inharmonious trio, was a sentimental duet between two cats on the parapet close to her window, that would have disturbed even the abstraction of an Archimedes. “I suppose I shall get used to it,” thought Clara, “but before I do, how many cheerless nights shall I pass!”—Her once splendid home in Berkeley Square, with the tasteful elegance of her *chambre à coucher*, were no longer thought of—she had taught herself to forget them; but her cheerful and neat little room at her aunt’s, with its little bed and snowy curtains, with the delicious odour of flowers that stole in through the casement, was remembered with regret, as she contrasted its simple comfort with the dingy and untidy attic in which she was now seated, and the still more untidy sleeping-room in which she must court slumber when fatigue compelled her to seek her uninviting pillow.

A loud knocking at her door awoke Clara early next morning, and she started from her hard couch with that sense of dreaming confusion that one never fails to experience on being suddenly aroused from sleep, and in a bed where one has slumbered for the first time. She threw her *robe de chambre* over her person, and unlocked the door to Betsey, who told her, with no little degree of *brusquerie* of manner, that “it was against missis’s orders that any of the servants should sleep with locked doors.” Clara felt the blush of wounded pride rise to her cheek, at being thus, by implication, included in the class of menials; but seeing the cool determination to be insolent that marked every movement of Betsey, as the latter whirled her mop almost in her face, she resolved to forbear from reprimanding her; but Miss Williamson, who had some pique against Betsey for sins either of omission or commission, or probably at being awoke from sleep, reproved the *cameriera* by saying, “Miss Mordaunt is *not* a servant, but a lady.”

"Marry come up! a lady, indeed," repeated Betsey; "I never seed no ladies as went out to service as governesses, and took wages the same as us servants."

"You will be so good as to be silent," said Clara, with calm dignity.

"I have as much right to talk as another," muttered the chambermaid.

"Then if you are determined to talk, I must request you to leave the room."

"With all my heart, and now wash and dress the young ladies yourself, or leave it alone, and clean up the rooms too, for, remember, you ordered me to be off;" and so saying, she trundled her mop, whisked a duster close to the person of Clara, and left the apartment, violently slamming the door after her.

Miss Mordaunt now took the children from their beds, and proceeded to perform the unwonted task of their ablution, and though this was executed with a gentleness to which they were strangers, still they screamed, winced, and whimpered, as if subjected to the punishment of Marsyas, and declared that Betsey, and Betsey alone, should wash and dress them. The patience and perseverance of Clara however conquered their wilfulness, and their toilets being completed, she requested Miss Williamson to take charge of her young sisters, while she performed her own. But during this operation, which she hurried through with all possible celerity, she was stunned by the alternate peals of rude laughter and shrieks, proceeding from her *élèves*, as the two younger assailed each other, or resented the dictatorial reprehension of their senior.

"Call to sister, Miss Mordaunt!"—"No; 'tis Arabella's fault; she won't *leave* me alone."—"Laura has slapped me, Miss Mordaunt."—"And naughty sissy has pinched me," screamed the youngest, while Miss Williamson, proud of her "brief authority," scolded, shook, and slapped her sisters, who endeavoured to return her favours with hearty good will.

Her own toilette completed, and an hour having been devoted to lessons, Clara rang the bell, but no one answered her summons. She at length concluded that Betsey was in sober earnest determined on persevering in her threat of not coming back to the nursery-room, and as the young ladies

became vociferous in their impatience for breakfast, nothing remained for Miss Mordaunt but to descend in search of some domestic who would furnish that repast. On the back stairs she met the under-housemaid, brush in hand, who, to her request to bring up breakfast to the nursery, replied, still continuing her occupation, and sending clouds of dust around, "that she was not nursery-maid." In the hall the porter was ensconced in his leathern chair, reading the paper of the evening before, and two footmen, "in most admired disorder," were *sans* coats, and with unpowdered heads, holding a dialogue in which animation was more remarkable than purity of diction. The air of dignified reserve with which Clara made known her wishes imposed a restraint on the trio. The porter recollecting a certain *douceur* received from her aunt on the occasion of Miss Mordaunt's entrance into the house, laid by his paper, and even doffed the fur cap in which his head was encased, and told "John" he had better go to the housekeeper and ask for the nursery breakfast.

"It's not my place," replied John.

"Then you, Thomas, had better go," said the porter.

"I can't, for I have master's clothes to brush, before Mr. Simpson, the walet, gets up, and he'll be desperate angry if they a'nt finished;" and here Thomas, suiting the action to the word, commenced brushing a coat and unmentionables, with extraordinary vigour, on the hall table.

"If you will show me the way to the housekeeper's room, I shall be obliged to you," said Clara to the porter, observing that he seemed the most civilly disposed. He marshalled her down the obscure stairs, on the first landing-place of which he met the under-butler, with a tray covered with silver forks, spoons, etc.

"I say, William, will you show miss the housekeeper's room, for I'm afraid of some persons knocking at the door in my absence, and I know that them there chaps above would not be at the trouble to open the door for me."

"Well! if miss will follow me," said the under-butler, "I'll show her the door; but I must not be seen, for Mr. Robins, the butler, is in a very bad humour this morning, I can tell ye, and has been swearing after me this half-hour."

Having led Clara through a long and dimly-lighted passage, with various doors branching off at each side, he pointed with his head (both hands being occupied with holding the tray) to a

closed door, and then departed, leaving Clara timidly knocking at it.

“Come in, come in, I say,” squeaked a shrill pointed voice, and Clara, having opened the door, found herself in the presence of a group of the upper servants, consisting of the lady’s maid, housekeeper, valet, and butler, surrounding a breakfast-table, copiously supplied with various delicate viands, to which they appeared to be doing ample justice, while standing at a little distance from the table was Betsey, with cheeks inflamed and sparkling eyes, it being evident, from her look of embarrassment on seeing Clara, that she had been recounting her difference with the “new governess,” as she called Miss Mordaunt.

The party remained seated, and the lady’s maid continued to discuss the lamb-cutlet on her plate, while the spruce Mr. Simpson poured some rich cream into her coffee. “What do you please to want, miss?” asked the portly mistress of the keys, in a tone which indicated that *she* was not pleased at the intrusion into her room.

“I wish breakfast to be taken up for the young ladies and me.”

“Well, I’m sure, miss, I don’t know how that can well be done,” replied the *femme-de-charge*, “for as you have ordered Betsey out of the room, and that it is her business, and nobody else’s, to take up things to the nursery, I can’t ask any one else to do her work.”

“Then I must acquaint Mrs. Williamson with this strange conduct.”

“O! as for the matter of that, miss, my missis is not one as ever listens to no stories, and those as takes ’em to her don’t stay long to disturb the peace of the family.”

Clara had never before been exposed to that most galling of all petty annoyances—the insolence of servants. Her gentleness and equanimity of temper, added to a grave but gracious manner towards them, would, she hoped, have shielded her from rudeness; but the seeds of anger and dislike were sown in the mind of Betsey, and their effects were but too visible. This was the consequence of her misinterpretation of the remark of Clara, the day before, or rather the misrepresentation of that remark, as repeated by Miss Williamson; and the susceptible Betsey, having complained of the “new governess” looking down on her because she was a servant, had been

advised by the gentry in the servant's hall not to give way to such treatment.

There are minor miseries in life much more difficult to be borne with patience than heavy trials, not being of a nature to call forth that resignation with which we arm ourselves to support the misfortunes we know to be inevitable. But Clara had, the moment she determined on entering on the arduous and painful duties of a governess, formed the resolution to which she now rigidly adhered, that no temptation should ever induce her to give way to the dictates of anger ; a resolution difficult to support under the present insolence to which she was exposed.

She therefore tranquilly turned to the housekeeper, and said, "rather than that the young ladies should go without their breakfasts, I will carry up the tray myself."

At this moment the door opened, and a man of respectable appearance entered, whose eyes no sooner fell on Clara, than taking off his hat, and bowing low to her, with that obsequious deference which marks the manners of domestics to those of their superiors whom they most respect, "he hoped he had the honour of seeing Miss Mordaunt well, and that Mrs. Waller was in good health."

How many recollections of her prosperous days, when blessed with a father, and basking in the smiles of fortune, were brought back to her mind by the presence of this man ! He had been the upper servant in her family, and his respectful demeanour, coming in such contrast to the insolence she had been exposed to ever since her entrance in her new and uncongenial position, brought tears to her eyes.

On seeing her emotion, Betsey, who, though susceptible, was not implacable, instantly seized the tray, and said that "Miss and the young ladies should have breakfast immediately."

Clara was retiring from the chamber, when Walker begged to offer her his grateful and humble acknowledgements for the excellent situation her recommendation had procured him, and expressed his anxious desire to be of use to her or her worthy aunt, whose goodness he should never forget.

Clara hastened to her room, but not all the philosophy she summoned to her aid could repress the tears that filled her eyes, or the pang that shot through her heart, at the recollections evoked by the presence of one who had been a witness

and a humble partaker of her prosperity. Well did the truth of Dante's beautiful sentiment—

“nessun maggior dolore,
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria,”

strike her at this moment, and it required no slight exertion of her self-command to meet the inquisitive demands of her pupils—“why she had been weeping, and when they were to have their breakfasts?” attaching much more interest to the *second* question than to the *first*.

When Betsey came up with the tray a few minutes after, her whole demeanour was changed, and with a humility that would have softened a more harsh nature than Clara's, she apologized for her conduct, and hoped Miss Mordaunt would overlook it.

“Mr. Walker, miss, has told us all what a *grand* lady you once were; and you have shown us, miss, by your patience, what a *good* lady you still are. Indeed, miss, when I heard you offer to take up the tray, I felt ashamed of myself; but when Mr. Walker told us what an indulgent, generous, sweet-tempered mistress you were in your father's fine house, we were all moved, and sorry enough for our behaviour to you”—

“Say no more, my good Betsey,” replied Clara; “but for my sake always remember, that a governess has need of all the civility of the domestics, as well as the kindness of her employers, to enable her to fulfil the arduous duties she has undertaken; and that though she may not have known a more prosperous condition than the one you see her in, she is still entitled to civility.”

“Indeed, miss, you are quite right, and I'll never forget it;” and a tear trembled in the eye of Betsey as she carefully arranged the breakfast-table.

“And so, Miss Mordaunt, you are a lady after all?” said Miss Williamson, looking at Clara. “Well, who'd have thought it; for though I told Betsey that you were, it was only to vex her; I did not believe it.” The *naïveté* of this remark struck Clara as being so irresistibly comic, that she could not resist a smile, though, Heaven knows, she was never less disposed to relax into one. “This proves that mamma is *not* always right; for she said that governesses were *never* ladies, but were merely useful to teach young people how to behave as ladies.”

“ You must never repeat what mamma says to you, my dear,” said Clara calmly ;— a prohibition that seemed to mortify Miss Williamson not a little ; but the expression of her mortification was spared Clara, for the unusual luxuriousness of the breakfast attracted the *gourmande* propensity of the young lady, who exclaimed with delight—

“ Oh ! dear me, what a delightful breakfast—what nice fresh bread, instead of the nasty stale hard loaf we used to get ; and fresh butter, I declare, and a pat for each, and cream too ! Why this is a nice breakfast—and this is what we have got by Miss Mordaunt’s going down herself to fight that nasty cross fussy housekeeper.”

“ I must request you, Miss Williamson, not to use such terms, and to be assured that I did *not* fight with the housekeeper, as you erroneously suppose.”

“ Then why have we such a different breakfast ?” asked her pertinacious pupil, who was voraciously devouring it.

“ If Mrs. Williamson prohibits fresh bread, or any of the other things on the table, Betsey,” said Miss Mordaunt, “ I beg that no difference will be made on my account.”

“ Why, Lord love you, miss, missis never troubles her head, or knows nothing whatsoever of the matter ; but as the housekeeper and lady’s maid has had tiffs with all the governesses as comed here afore you, miss, stale bread, salt butter, and skim milk, with bad tea, was sent up to the school-room to vex ’em ; and, if they complained, missis was told that they had the best of everything, but that there was no pleasing ’em ; and this vexed missis, and she turned ’em off one after another. But now, miss, there will be a great change, for Mr. Walker, who is own brother to our housekeeper, has made her promise never to give you no bad breakfasts or dinners, for he told her you were used to the best of everything at home.”

“ Oh dear, how nice !” exclaimed Miss Williamson, clapping her hands joyfully, “ to have good breakfasts and dinners every day ;” and “ How nice !” was echoed by her sisters, who imitated her movements, and clapped their little hands with delight.

It was painful to Clara to witness the *gourmandise* of her pupils, but she made allowance for them, from the belief that it had been engendered by the bad quality and insufficient quantity of their food hitherto, and she determined to check it as soon and as effectually as possible.

Not even the advantages of respectful attention, and few more valued it than Clara, could console her naturally proud mind for the regret she experienced at having her former station in society known, and thus becoming an object of commiseration to the servants. But she felt this was a part of the old leaven of her nature—a symptom of her besetting sin, which was pride—and she endeavoured to reason herself out of it. It was a relief to her when Mrs. Popkins came to acquaint her that Mrs. Williamson would not require her to read in her dressing-room that morning, an announcement which she had been urging her lady to permit her to make ever since the preceding day.

“Indeed, ma’am, I can’t do justice to your hair while you are turning your head about to listen or speak to Miss Mordaunt; and then a curl or braid goes wrong, and you are disfigured for the day. I’m sure, yesterday, you did not look a bit like yourself; and the butler observed that you appeared not half so beautiful as usual.”

“I wish you would not repeat to me what those sort of people say,” replied Mrs. Williamson, with one of her most dignified looks; “what can they possibly know of beauty, or any thing else?”

The superciliousness of this speech, as applied to one of *her order*, and, above all, to one of whose taste she considered his admiration of herself an indubitable proof, mortified her *femme de chambre* exceedingly, and she avenged herself by using more violence with the tresses of her mistress than was necessary, or than that lady was inclined to submit to with patience.

Now that Mrs. Popkins knew that Miss Mordaunt was a lady, a fact she never before admitted to be possible in a governess, she more than ever feared her acquiring an influence over the weak and selfish Mrs. Williamson, which might be injurious to her own interests, so that when sent to announce to that young lady the message we have before stated, the *colère* she had felt was appeased.

“What a vain fool my mistress is,” thought she; “she cannot bear that even her own servants should think her not looking well! I warrant me that had I told her that the butler said she looked beautiful, she would not have desired me ‘never to repeat what those sort of people say;’” and here, while ascending the stairs to the nursery, she did not resist mimicking the air and tone of her lady, which she did very

comically. "If she knew," thought the abigail, "what the valet and butler *really* do say about her, I don't think she'd like it much; for they are always laughing at the way she minces her words, and half shuts her eyes; and her rouge and pearl powder, and false braids, they say, make her look like an old ewe dished up lamb fashion."

A most comfortable dinner, neatly served, was brought to the nursery-room, with iced water, napkins, and finger-glasses, which unusual appendages drew forth several remarks from Clara's pupils. Mrs. Williamson happily dined out that day, so that Clara was spared the disagreeable visit at dessert, but the housekeeper came in person, with fruit and cake, which she presented in the most respectful manner, assuring Miss Mordaunt that she should feel proud to show her gratitude to so amiable a lady, for all the kindness her brother had experienced during so many years beneath her honoured father's roof, and she only wished she had known before who it was they had the honour to have in the house, and no want of attention should ever have taken place. The butler, too, not to be outdone in generosity, a generosity at the expense of his master, brought up two kinds of wine, but, to the deep mortification of the Misses Williamsons in general, and their elder sister in particular, Miss Mordaunt declined it for herself and them. Betsey was indefatigable in her attentions to the nursery room, and performed a thousand little services for Clara, so kindly meant, and actively though gently executed, that there was no declining them. Even the children seemed already to have become more tractable under the guidance of their mild but firm governess, and when they had retired to their beds, it was with a deep feeling of gratitude that she knelt to the AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD, to thank HIM that the performance of her task seemed to promise to be less irksome than she had imagined, and to pray for courage to support it should it prove less light than she now hoped it would.

Betsey would willingly have performed the functions of a *femme de chambre* for Clara, but she was resolute in declining her services, assuring her that she never required the slightest assistance, an assurance it was necessary to give, to satisfy Betsey that Miss Mordaunt did not refuse her offer from pique at the recollection of the morning's conduct.

"I hope, miss, that if you like it, you will lock your door at night," said Betsey.

“ I thought you told me that Mrs. Williamson would not permit it,” replied Clara.

“ She will never know it, miss,” said Betsey, “ and if it makes you feel more secure, where’s the harm?”

“ There was none *whilst* I was ignorant of her wishes on this point, Betsey; but now that I *do* know, I must not infringe on them. We should always scrupulously adhere to the regulations of our employers.”

The story of Miss Mordaunt’s *former state* had spread through the whole household of Mr. Williamson. Walker had left untold nothing of the splendour and elegance of her father’s mansion in its palmy days.

“ I have seen,” repeated he, warming with his subject, “ my young mistress sparkling in diamonds, doing the honours of her father’s table to some of the highest nobility in the land; ay, and to royalty too. I wonder do they ever recollect the poor orphan their hospitable host left behind him?”

“ Not they, I warrant,” said the housekeeper. “ Eaten bread is soon forgotten, brother, and the grand folk have so many engagements of pleasure on their hands, that they have not time to think of those who can no longer offer them new ones.”

“ Why, as to the matter of that,” said the *femme de chambre*, “ I don’t see that the nobility are so much to be blamed in such cases. They know well enough that a rich merchant like Mr. Mordaunt, who is not of their own rank, only asks them out of sheer vanity, on account of their titles. They condescend to eat his good dinners and drink his rare wines, thinking all the time that they confer a high honour on him, and that when a paid paragraph is inserted by his desire in the fashionable papers giving a long list of their names, as having partaken of the splendid dinner at Mr. Mordaunt’s on such a day, all obligation is at an end.”

“ Well, perhaps there may be some truth in that,” said Walker, with a sigh. “ But never was there a more hospitable gentlemen than poor Mr. Mordaunt. Grand dinners five days out of the seven, the tables covered with gold and silver plate, well filled with the choicest dainties, and the guests the highest in the land.”

“ Had he many of his equals at those grand dinners?” asked the *femme de chambre*.

“ I can’t say he had,” replied Walker; “ it was his only

fault that he liked to have dukes, marquises, and earls about him, neglecting the friends of his own station."

"Yes," said the housekeeper, "your poor master was what I call a hostentatious, more than a *ospitable* gentleman, and he paid dearly for it, for there is no doubt but that if he had given his good dinners to bankers, and merchants, like himself, they might have helped him in the hour of need, propped up his credit with theirs, or at all events behaved kindly to his poor daughter; but I warrant me, the nobility who ate so many of his good dinners won't trouble their heads about her."

"They won't trouble their *hearts* at any rate," said the pert abigail, "because they have none;" a witticism which was applauded by a general smile, though Walker dissented from the assertion, by declaring that he knew several of the nobility who not only *had hearts*, but as good hearts as ever existed.

"You have been more lucky then than I have," retorted Mrs. Popkins, "for I have lived in four noble families, in which I saw many proofs of good *stomachs*, but few of good *hearts*. Why, there was Lord Madderston and my Lady, who cared for no living creatures except themselves, not even for their own children, to whom they grudged the necessaries of life, and denied the comforts; *he* thinking of nothing but Newmarket, and she of nought except operas, balls, and routes—that was a precious couple! I've heard 'em, many's the time, arguing, when I've been in the next room—'I certainly will *not* go to that odious vulgar Mrs. Tomkins,' said my lady; 'she is a perfect *bourgeoise*, and bores me to extinction with her affectation.'—'But her rich husband is about to lend me ten thousand pounds, at five per cent, and on security not quite marketable, replied my lord, 'and if you offend her she will prevent him, for he is a weak fool, and governed by her.'—'But what am *I* to gain by the loan, my good lord?' asked she.—'Gain! what a question! why, *without it* you will be obliged to give up London and your set, for I cannot pay the house bills, and our credit will not hold out to the end of the season.'—'I dare say Mr. Tomkins's ten thousand will go where so many other thousands have preceded them, to Newmarket and your clubs.'—'And you would prefer that some part of them found their way to Maradan's, to pay off your long bill for French frippery, Storr and Mortimer's for gewgaws you did not want, and your opera-box, which is, of course, one of your indispensable necessaries of life. I

tell you what, Lady Madderston'——' And I tell *you* what, Lord Madderston, let us not quarrel—that does no good, and is a waste of time; give me two thousand out of the ten, to scatter judiciously amongst my importunate creditors, and I will go and dine with that odious vulgar Mrs. Tomkins, and act the amiable to her, but not otherwise.' My lord has consented, for he knew well enough *she* would have her way, and then the whole morning of the day of the dinner, she has been in such an ill humour that there was no living with her. When I have asked her what dress I should put out for her to wear, the answer has been, 'any thing will do,' and the whole time she was dressing, she was so pettish and hard to please that I wished her and Mrs. Tomkins too a thousand miles off."

This was only one of many equally severe descriptions given by Mrs. Popkins, who, having a certain degree of pert vivacity, which she mistook for cleverness, was never so happy as when detailing the sayings and doings of her employers, past and present, in the housekeeper's room, where the secrets of many a boudoir were laid open to her circle with all the malice and exaggeration she could lend to them.

Walker, when he had done ample justice to the magnificence of Mr. Mordaunt's establishment, forgot not to dwell with warm eulogiums on the generosity, gentleness, and goodness of his young mistress, as he styled Clara. Innumerable were the instances he recorded of poor families relieved by her bounty, and decayed servants pensioned from her purse, until he excited for her in the hearts of his hearers a strong sentiment of respectful pity, that was henceforth evinced by a vigilant attention to her personal comfort. And she now discovered that the decried race of servants is as susceptible of good as of evil, and as willing to repay kindness in the hour of need, nay, frequently more so, than many individuals in the upper classes, whose memories are so tenacious of benefits received that they dislike seeing those who have conferred them, lest such benefactors may indulge the foolish belief that they are to be repaid by kindness of manner. It was a conviction of this dislike to see those who had obliged them, that led a certain modern Cræsus, when tired of the greater part of his fashionable friends, to lend them considerable sums of money. His speculation succeeded perfectly, for he never saw any of them enter his doors after.

A summons from Mrs. Williamson in half an hour after her children had paid her their usual morning visit of ten minutes, impressed Clara with a presentiment of coming annoyance.

"I sent for you, Miss —— ; what is your name ?"

"Mordaunt, madam."

"Well, Miss Mordaunt, I sent for you to say that I think it very extraordinary, very extraordinary indeed," and her colour rose, "that when I gave a message to Miss Williamson for you, she told me you had insisted on her never repeating to you any thing I said. Now this is really too bad, and I wonder you could be so wicked as to teach children to disrespect their parents."

"I assure you, madam, I never could be guilty of so glaring an impropriety."

"And I assure you, my daughter never tells an untruth. Popkins, send for Miss Williamson immediately," said the angry mother, "for she shall repeat your words before your face."

Clara felt shocked at being thus confronted with her pupil, her veracity doubted, and her conduct commented on in presence of a servant. Nor did the impertinently familiar glance of commiseration, which Popkins gave her as she left the chamber, help to reassure her.

When Miss Williamson made her appearance, her mother asked her in the tone of a prejudiced cross-examiner, rather than an impartial questioner, "Did not Miss Mordaunt tell you that you were never to repeat any message from me." The child felt there was something wrong, and looked abashed. "Have you lost your tongue?" asked the angry mother.

"Yes, mamma, Miss Mordaunt did say I was never to repeat any thing you said to me."

"You see, Miss Mordaunt, that my daughter repeats it to your face."

Clara, who had totally forgotten that she had ever given this prohibition, now recollected on what occasion it was, and begged permission to ask Miss Williamson what led to it.

"I was saying," replied the awkward girl, "what mamma said, that governesses were *never ladies*, but merely useful to teach young people how to behave as ladies," (Mrs. Williamson's face grew red,) "and Miss Mordaunt said, 'you must never repeat what your mamma says to you.'"

"And Miss Mordaunt was quite right," said the abashed

mother ; “ and you are a stupid silly fool to make such a blunder. Leave the room ; you deserve to be severely punished.”

Away went the sobbing girl, not able to comprehend what fault she had committed, having been hitherto always encouraged to repeat in her mother’s boudoir all the *on dits* of the nursery, and to tell her former governess all that mamma said. Clara pitied the mortification of her pupil, whose *gaucherie* saved her for that day from a further lecture, and enabled her to quit the presence of Mrs. Williamson, who seemed not a little embarrassed, though too wilful and ill-bred to apologize for her rudeness.

The firmness with which Clara exercised her gentle sway in the nursery had already produced a visible and salutary effect on her pupils. The elder one was now rarely refractory, the second was much less froward, and even the little one was beginning to learn the hard lesson of obedience, after having been spoilt by undue indulgence from all who approached her. Thankfully did Clara observe this rapid improvement, and firmly did she resolve to persevere in the system that had led to it. Her success in this, her first effort in tuition, encouraged her to persevere in the arduous undertaking, though its wearisome monotony, uncheered by the approval of the parents of her pupils, or the time for mental relaxation, was a severe trial to one who had been from her infancy accustomed to meet with sympathy and affection.

When her pupils had retired for the night, and Clara was left to the solitude of her dimly-lighted apartment, how fondly, but pensively did her memory revert to the happy days of her early youth—to that dearly loved father, whose terrible death hung as a dark cloud over the past, and cast its shadow over the future. Then would the humble but neat abode of her aunt present itself in painful contrast with the cheerless chamber where she sat ; and that dear, good aunt, with her pale and care-worn brow supported on her hand, left alone to dwell on bitter fancies, without one fond voice to cheer, or one kind heart to soothe her solitude, would seem to stand before her until her tears would fall over the needle-work on which she was employed ; and she sought her pillow to lose in dreams of the past, the dreary present and clouded future.

A succession of dinner engagements abroad had for several days saved Clara from a summons to dessert ; but she was now called on to appear, with her pupil, and perform this most irk-

some part of her duty. She found, in addition to the family party, an elderly lady, and a young gentleman in deep mourning, whose dark eyes and complexion announced them to belong to some tropical climate, while their continual reference to each other, as "my son," or "my mother," explained their consanguinity. The lady was of short stature, but of extreme *embonpoint*, and the white of her eyes, instead of that pellucid tint that the eyes of the generality of persons possess, was of a dead opaque white, that gave her face a striking resemblance to some of the discoloured busts found at Herculaneum, and contrasted strangely with the shining black curls that hung around her cheeks. Her dress, too, was remarkable; for she wore a profusion of fine diamonds, set in the very worst taste, on her neck and arms, which being of a very dark hue, made their brightness still more observable. She committed many solecisms in good breeding, and still more in grammar, but seemed by no means conscious of her own deficiencies in the difficult science of *savoir vivre*. Her son, to whom she was continually referring, was much less dark than his bronzed mamma, but still sufficiently so to indicate an admixture of creole blood in his veins. His hair, too, was of the peculiar texture, colour, and curl, which belong only to that caste; and his eyes flashed, if not with intelligence, at least with a vivacity that denoted the prevalence of animal over mental tastes, in his character. He fixed them on Clara the moment she entered the *salle-à-manger*, with an expression of undisguised admiration, that embarrassed her not a little, while his mother mingled praises of Miss Williamson, whom she designated as a dear little piccaninny, and dispraises of the pine apple, which she declared to be insipid and turnip-like, in comparison with those of Jamaica. She expressed her annoyance at not finding yams served up at English tables, and declared that the turtle soup of Liverpool and London was a weak and tasteless liquid, as compared with that of her native land; and that the lime punch was a totally different beverage. In short, the good things of this life seemed to be appreciated by her, at more than the usual consideration accorded to them; and she talked with a degree of unctuousness of the luxurious delicacies peculiar to the West Indies, which proved she was an adept in gourmandism, with great pretensions to epicurism. But no, let me efface the last term, which is so injuriously and so falsely applied to the philosopher from whom it takes its

name; and let me not confound his refined moral system with the indulgence in sensual enjoyments of those professing themselves epicureans. I have never without indignation heard the term applied, since I read "*Browne's Inquiries into Vulgar and Common Errors*," and yet I was about to use it in this injurious sense; so prone are we to continue in errors we have once believed. But how many of our opinions are founded on equally erroneous premises!

Mrs. Williamson seemed more than usually ungracious in her manner towards Clara, and Mr. Williamson offered her wine and fruit with a trepidation of manner that denoted he was afraid of being lectured for so doing. Clara found his eyes fixed on her more than once with an expression of interest and pity that excited her good will, and the commendations he bestowed on the improvement visible in the manners of his daughter, repaid her governess for the pains she had taken to effect this amelioration.

"Well, I confess *I* see no difference in Helena," said her illiberal mother; "she was always as well-bred as other children of her age; but you, Mr. Williamson, are one of those who are prone to believe that 'new brooms sweep clean.'"

Clara looked not more disconcerted by this unfeeling and vulgar remark than did the good-natured Mr. Williamson, but he had sufficient knowledge of his wife's temper, to be aware that any remonstrance from him would only provoke her to greater rudeness.

"How much do you pay miss for looking after your piccaninies?" asked Mrs. Marsden, for by that name she now heard that lady addressed.

"I pay her twenty-five guineas a-year," replied Mrs. Williamson.

"Just what I pay my maid," remarked the creole.

"And what I have agreed to pay my tiger," said her hopeful son. "Faith! I think I shall take a governess for myself," continued he, "but I shall bargain for her being as young and pretty as miss," looking impudently at Clara, who felt indignant at being made the object of his indelicate remarks.

"Single gentlemen do not keep governesses," said Mrs. Williamson.

"O! that, I suppose, is a privilege reserved for the married men, and a devilish agreeable privilege it is, eh,—my old boy!" turning to his host; "do you not find it so?"

Mr. Williamson blushed, being nearly as much embarrassed as Clara, at this coarse insinuation, and his wife looked angrily at him, as if she would say, "you see what your asking the governess to drink wine gives rise to."

"My son is very droll," said Mrs. Marsden; "he was counted the funniest chap in all Jamaica; you should have seen him at one of the Quadroon balls; how he made them all laugh."

Her son looked angrily at her, and a warmer tinge rose to her dark cheek.

"What balls did you say?" demanded Mrs. Williamson.

"She meant the fashionable balls at Jamaica," said her son, not trusting his mother to get out of the dilemma into which her forgetfulness of his injunctions had placed her.

"O! the Almack's of Jamaica, I suppose," said Mrs. Williamson, "where only those of their own order or caste, as they call it, are permitted to appear."

"Exactly," said Mrs. Marsden, "but I did not imagine you had any such distinctions here, having none of the half-caste, as in the West Indies."

Again the dark eyes of her son flashed on her, and again she felt that she had incurred his anger.

"We have many distinctions in society in England," said Mrs. Williamson, pitying Mrs. Marsden's embarrassment, and wishing to cover it, "and some of them are equally as illiberal as those to which you refer in your country. The great difference is, that *here* wealth can purchase a golden key that opens all circles, from that of the court to the most professedly exclusive of the aristocratic re-unions."

"What! even to a half-caste?" asked Mrs. Marsden.

"She means to those less fashionable than themselves," said her son, and he looked at his mother with an expression of suppressed rage that shocked Clara.

The next day brought Miss Mordaunt the following letter, which she read with equal astonishment and disgust:

"My lovely angel,—I have dreamt of you all night, and love you so dearly that I am ready to give you five hundred pounds if you will be my governess, instead of remaining with that pale-faced chit, I saw you bear-leading last evening for the miserable pittance of twenty-five guineas. You will certainly be more comfortable with my mother and me, than in

your present abode, and you will find us both liberal and good-natured. The old lady will give you a handsome salary for showing her the sights of England, writing her letters, and reading to her, and you shall have no reason to complain of the generosity of your adoring “HERCULES MARSDEN.”

Tears of wounded pride and delicacy started to the eyes of Clara, as she threw the odious letter from her. The open profligacy and the disgusting imprudence of the writer shocked her, and the mixing up his mother's name in the insulting and infamous proposal he had dared to make her, filled her with horror and astonishment. “How fearfully demoralized must such a mother and son be!” thought Clara, as she reflected on the letter; and she felt a sense of degradation at having been brought in contact with such persons. She shrank from making the vulgar Mrs. Williamson acquainted with the insult she had received; judge then of her surprise, when, in two days after the receipt of the letter, that lady asked her if she meant to accept the offer of becoming companion to Mrs. Marsden, as the latter had acquainted her that the proposal had been made.

“I do not think it was proper conduct on Mrs. Marsden's part,” continued Mrs. Williamson, “to make you the offer without asking me if I wished to part with you. It was just the same shabby treatment I experienced from Mrs. Davenport, who seduced my last maid by the offer of higher wages. But as I do not wish to prevent your forming a more profitable engagement, I am willing to let you go.”

“I never for a moment intended to give the offer even a moment's consideration,” replied Clara, observing that Mrs. Williamson was totally ignorant of the insulting part of it; “and if you, madam, are satisfied with my services, I have no wish to change.”

“O! I am satisfied,” said Mrs. Williamson; “blessed are they who expect not, etc. etc. I never look for miracles of perfection in those I employ, and therefore am not easily vexed or disappointed.”

“I hope, madam, that you have not found me wanting in zeal to fulfil the arduous task I have undertaken.”

“Arduous, arduous!” repeated Mrs. Williamson, with an ironical look. “I really do not understand you. What do you mean by talking of arduous? Here you are well lodged,

well fed, with nothing to think of except teaching the children, and making and mending their clothes; you have a good salary, and what I call an easy life, and yet you talk of arduous duties!"

Clara felt that to reason with such a woman would be time lost, and therefore remained silent.

"And now," resumed Mrs. Williamson, "as we are on the subject, I may as well tell you that I am *not* quite satisfied on one point. You have put strange notions into my children's heads, that you are, forsooth, a lady, a real lady. Now I don't like such nonsense, and therefore I beg there may be no more of it."

"I beg to assure you, madam,——"

"I want no assurances; I only warn you that I want a governess for my children, and not a fine lady, who tells them of her past grandeur, and puts a pack of foolish notions into their heads;" and, so saying, she flounced out of the room to avoid hearing Clara's justification;—an unworthy trick often practised by those in power against those they accuse, but will not hear acquitted.

Often did Clara ask herself, in the words which our immortal bard has given to Antony, "And must I bear all this?" and as often did her reason tell her, that, as we cannot prevent trials of temper and patience, we should endeavour to turn them to account by making them moral exercises, by which we acquire the mastery of ourselves. In this system of self-control, the most difficult of all to be acquired, she now made daily progress, and its beneficial effects were not only visible in herself, but in the children, and even in the servants who approached her.

"Miss Mordaunt is never *angry*," said Helena Williamson to her sister, when she was giving way to an ebullition of ill-temper.

"No, but she is *sorry*," said the child, "and I won't make good Miss Mordaunt sorry."

The period permitted by Mrs. Williamson for Clara to receive the long wished-for visit of her aunt had now arrived, and though frequent letters had passed between them, through the only circulating medium wherein the advantages to the poor are more considered than those to the rich, still each had impatiently looked forward to an interview. Mrs. Waller was surprised at the respectful attention she now experienced from

the servants, so different to their former reception of her and her niece, and marked with pleasure the increased docility of Clara's pupils, and their visible attachment to her to whom it was due. But the satisfaction this gave her was decreased, by observing the altered looks of Clara, whose pale cheek and languid eyes bore evidence of fatigue and ill-health. Accustomed to be loved, affection was almost as necessary to the sensitive heart of Miss Mordaunt, as are air and food to the existence of the frame; and she threw herself into the arms of her fond aunt, with a joy that evinced how much she longed for this sanctuary, which had been ever open to all her childish cares and womanly afflictions.

"How have I missed you, my precious child!" said Mrs. Waller, moved to tears. "O! you know not, Clara, what it is,—and may you never know it,—to be left alone in age, with no fond hand to offer the tasteless food, or smooth the sleepless pillow—no sweet voice to read aloud, or to cheer by conversation—no one to talk to of the past, or to hope with for the future! But this is wrong and selfish, and I am blameable, for thus embittering the pleasure of our interview with useless murmurs."

Clara dwelt with gratitude on the few *agrémens* of her situation, carefully concealing its many annoyances, because she knew her aunt would feel them even more acutely than she did. Of the gross and vulgar letter from Mr. Marsden, she carefully abstained from speaking, shrinking with true feminine delicacy from revealing even to her dearest and truest friend the insult offered to her, the knowledge of which would have been so severe a trial to the feelings of her aunt. Refreshments were brought up, and respectfully offered to Mrs. Waller; the good-natured Betsey was on the alert, to show her devotion to Miss Mordaunt, and Mrs. Waller went away from Brook-street, impressed with the agreeable conviction, that her niece was surrounded by persons who could appreciate her amiability and gentleness, if they could not return it.

The morning after Mrs. Waller's visit, Miss Mordaunt was summoned to the dressing-room of Mrs. Williamson.

"I have sent for you to say, that we go to my country house to-morrow," (Mrs. Williamson was extremely addicted to the pronoun *my*, invariably appearing to forget that her liege lord had any share in the possessions of which she boasted), "and that I intend to take you and the children. I advise you to

take as little luggage as possible, as you are to go by an early coach, and luggage over a given quantity is charge extra. The children go in the carriage with me."

Clara had never been in a public conveyance, and had that sort of instinctive dread of it, which young ladies accustomed to privacy and refinement are apt to entertain. Perhaps her countenance betrayed some involuntary symptom of this, for Mrs. Williamson turned sharply to her, and demanded ironically if she was too fine a lady to go in a stage coach?

"I have no objection, madam," replied Clara, "provided I have some protection."

"Protection, indeed! pray, what's to happen to you? The nursery-maid will go by the same conveyance, and that I suppose you will think protection enough? You may now go and help to pack the children's things, for you will have to start at six o'clock in the morning."

Clara hoped to escape the summons to dessert this evening, but her hopes were vain, and in the dining-room she found, in addition to the family party, Mrs. Marsden and her son, with another stranger. No sooner was she seated, than Mr. Hercules Marsden, forgetful that he was not master of the house, commenced offering Clara wine and fruit, to the evident displeasure of the hostess, who looked with anger at Miss Mordaunt, as if she considered her to blame for the unwelcomed attentions of Mr. Marsden. To Clara's reserved dissents to all his offers, he opposed a perseverance so rude, that his mother, observing the dissatisfaction expressed in the countenances of the host and hostess, remarked aloud that "Hercules was after all a good creature, that bore no malice, for certainly Miss Mordaunt had not behaved over civil in refusing to answer the letter he had written to her." This remark brought the blood to the cheeks of Clara, and excited a rude laugh from her tormentor, that restored to her some portion of her native *fierté*, which was displayed in a glance of unutterable contempt at him.

"I say, mother, look at the pretty piccaninny, as you call her, how fierce she looks."

"And serves you right, too," replied Mrs. Marsden; "none of us women, either young or old, like being laughed at; and so I tell you, Hercules, every day when you are passing your jokes on me, and grinning in my face."

Clara involuntarily turned to look at Mrs. Marsden as she concluded this observation, being anxious to discover by that lady's countenance how far she was *au fait* of her son's dishonourable conduct towards her, when, in doing so, her eyes encountered those of the most expressive male face she had ever beheld. Hers sank beneath the intensity of his gaze: but even though her lids veiled her eyes, she *felt* his were still fixed on her.

"And so to-morrow you positively go to the country?" said Mrs. Marsden. "Are you quite sure that our coming to you the first day of your arrival will not put you out of your way?"

Clara felt inexpressibly annoyed at discovering that the Marsdens were to be of the party in the country.

"With an establishment like mine," answered the *parvenue* hostess, "we can never be put out of our way."

"I hope, Mr. Seymour, you will be able to come to us to-morrow?" said Mrs. Williamson to the stranger.

"I certainly shall have that pleasure," replied he, in accents so agreeable to the ear, that Clara wondered if he had previously spoken, how she had not been struck with it.

"And how do you all go?" asked the inquisitive Mrs. Marsden.

"I take my three girls with me in my coach," replied Mrs. Williamson, "and Mr. Williamson will follow us at a later hour."

"And miss," nodding at Clara, "how does she go?" demanded the obtuse questioner.

"Oh! Miss Mordaunt goes by one of the public coaches," was the answer.

"Then, by Jove, so will I!" said Mr. Hercules.

"What, and leave me to travel alone! No, you can't be so unkind; you know how afraid I am."

"What can you be afraid of here?" asked her son, rudely; "in England there are no Obeahs!"

"How do you know that?" said his mother, with a look of terror, that produced a peal of laughter from her hopeful son.

"What are O B's?" asked Mrs. Williamson, in her mincing tones.

"Why, what a flat you must be, not to know!" was the polite rejoinder.

"Oh, dear! don't speak of 'em, pray don't!" said Mrs. Marsden. "I shan't close my eyes to-night if you do."

“ Well, mother, I must say you are about the greatest fool I ever met.”

“ That’s what you always say,” replied his mother, half offended, “ but many people wiser than you, for all you keep reading them there bad books on philosophy, or whatever you call it, that makes you doubt every thing in the world, except your own great wisdom, believe as I do, in the Obeahs.”

Mr. Williamson cast an imploring look at his wife, to induce her to withdraw, fearful that Mr. Marsden might behave still more rudely to his mother. And when the hostess gave the signal for retreat, Clara again caught the gaze of Mr. Seymour fixed on her, with an expression of interest that there was no mistaking. He had marked her look of offended modesty at the rude freedom of the West Indian, and of terror at his threat of accompanying her in the stage-coach, and he instantly determined on protecting her by his presence from the impertinences of which so ill-bred and impudent a person might be capable towards a young and lovely girl thus exposed to his society, without a protector to repel or resent his familiarity.

A hackney-coach was at the door at an early hour, into which Miss Mordaunt was respectfully handed by the porter, followed by Betsey, whose presence in a public conveyance was considered as a special protection by Clara in the absence of all other.

A comfortable breakfast had been prepared for her by the housekeeper, a mark of attention which, as Betsey failed not to remark aloud, had never been offered to any of her predecessors, who had always been forced to undertake similar journeys without any repast, save a slice of stale bread and a cup of smoked tea, prepared by the under kitchen-maid.

On arriving at the White-Horse Cellar, whence the stage-coaches depart, the vehicle in which Miss Mordaunt sat was quickly surrounded by three or four men vociferating their offers of service to assist her and remove her luggage to another coach. One seized her trunk, and another grasped her carpet bag, but their possession was contested by two or three of their companions, who one and all vehemently asserted that each had first opened the coach-door, and consequently had the best right to remove the lady’s luggage. The coachmen of various stages came up, with cigars occupying one corner of their mouths, and both hands placed in the pockets of their huge coats, and asked if “ miss would please to go by their coach ?”

“Take her to Staines, Hounslow, or Bagshot in less than no time—best coach on the road—would have her and her luggage stowed away in a jiffy.”

“Going to Winsor or Ampton Court, ma’am?” asked a second; “start in five minutes—go ten miles an hour.”

“Healing or Hacton, miss?” inquired another; “capital coach—just going.”

Clara shrank back affrighted and confused, her auricular faculties stunned by the din of so many rough voices, and her olfactory ones no less disagreeably assailed by the mingled odours of spirituous liquors and tobacco. Lucky for her was it that Betsey was not a novice in such scenes, for, with a self-possession that evinced her experience in them, she named the coach to which she gave the preference, dismissed the rival disputants for the removal of the luggage, consigning it to one of whom she had some previous knowledge. She then helped Miss Mordaunt through the noisy crowd, and pertinaciously resisted every attempt to extort a larger sum than the regulated fare for the coachman and the person who moved the luggage.

Betsey was in the act of assisting Clara into the stage-coach, when Mr. Seymour came forward from the crowd, and, respectfully bowing, offered his arm to Miss Mordaunt to enter the coach, and having performed the same service towards Betsey, followed, and seated himself *vis-à-vis* to the former.

They had scarcely been seated in the coach, when the voice of Mr. Hercules Marsden was heard, loudly demanding in which coach Miss Mordaunt was. No satisfactory answer being given to this question, he added—“I mean a devilish pretty girl, though rather palish in the face, with a pair of eyes so full of fire, that I might light my cigar at them!”

This refined compliment drew a peal of laughter from the assembled crowd of cads and coachmen, and induced Clara to shrink instinctively into the corner of the coach, in order to avoid observation. Meanwhile, Mr. Hercules Marsden, having protruded his head into several of the vehicles, at length advanced it into that in which our heroine was seated, and, discovering her, uttered an exclamation of delight, somewhat between a laugh and a shriek.

“So, I have found you at last, my pretty one! and, judging by your looks, you don’t seem overjoyed to see me! I judged

you could not be very far off, when I spied this gentleman," pointing to Mr. Seymour; "for I noticed yesterday that you seemed to understand each other pretty well, though you did not exchange as many words as looks; and I dare be sworn you had settled together to travel down in the same coach: eh! I have not guessed amiss, have I? Your blushes, my pretty one, convince me of the fact!" While this observation was uttering, accompanied by sundry winks and smiles, Mr. Hercules Marsden stood on the coach step, and the cad having come to ask if he was to take a seat, as they were going to start, he answered—"To be sure I will take a seat; why, you spooney, this," pointing to Clara, "is the lady I have been in search of, and now I have found her, I will not easily lose sight of her again, I can tell you! How much am I to pay, eh?"

"Vone pound height shillings, sir, is the fare."

"Here's two sovereigns; and hark ye, pay all the expenses and keep the change; but let me have no bother, d'ye hear?" The cad bowed low, pulled the front lock of his hair, showed a set of very yellow teeth, and retreated, muttering to some of the bystanders—"I say, yonder's a prime chap, ain't he? Vy, he's given me a matter of seven and sixpence for myself, though, dang me, if I can tell for what! He's as comical a blade as I've clapped my two good-looking eyes on these seven years!"

"Pray, ma'am, will you be so good-natured as to change places with me?" asked Mr. Hercules Marsden of Betsey.

"On no account!" whispered Clara.

"Come—come, whispering's not fair," said Mr. Marsden. "Now I've set my heart on sitting next to Miss Mordaunt, and rather than be baulked of that pleasure, hang me, if I won't give you five shiners!" pulling out his well-filled purse and jingling it.

"Not if you'd give me fifty, sir," replied Betsey, "would I do anything that could be offensive to Miss Mordaunt!"

"Offensive!" repeated the West Indian, with emphasis; "well, that's a good one, however: who meant to be offensive? Why, there's nothing I wouldn't do to please the young lady; yet she turns up her nose on me, as if I was not worthy of her notice!"

While these observations were making, Mr. Seymour was addressing the usual civilities that well-bred men offer to

ladies in public conveyances : he inquired “ whether she wished the glass up or down, and expressed his gratification at finding himself in the same coach with a lady journeying to the same mansion for which he was bound, and requested that Miss Mordaunt would not hesitate in making him useful *en route*.” These common-place courtesies were offered with such a respectful air, that Clara felt grateful for, and acknowledged them with politeness.

“ I say, Miss Mordaunt, why can’t you be as social with, and civil to me, as to Mr. Seymour?” demanded Mr. Hercules Marsden.

“ As long as your civilities, sir, are like this gentleman’s, marked by decorum, I can have no right to receive them with rudeness,” answered Miss Mordaunt.

“ Hang decorum !” said Mr. Marsden; “ all you English look and speak as if frolicking or fun were a crime. Now I’m a West Indian, and my blood is as hot as the pimento of my native clime, while yours is like the unripe fruit which your chilly sun cannot ripen. Now, there’s a good girl, exchange seats with me,” turning to Betsey, “ and, instead of the five shiners I spoke about, hang me if I don’t give you ten,” and again he drew out his purse.

“ I tell you what, sir,” replied Betsey, bridling with an assumption of no ordinary dignity, “ I’m one as is not to be influenced by the lucre of gain, and would not give you my seat for five times, ay, for ten times the sum you hoffer.”

“ Why, you look for all the world like a tragedy queen, my dear, throwing up your head so gravely,” said Mr. Hercules Marsden, looking at Betsey, and his countenance bearing a mixture of impertinence and comicality that provoked the ire of the nursery-maid, whose face became flushed with anger, as she uttered—

“ Don’t dear *me*, sir ! I’d have you to know I’m not to be deared by no one.” A shout of laughter from the West Indian added fuel to the fire of Betsey’s rage. “ They may laugh as wins,” observed she, “ but, mayhap, some people is not likely to win much, according to my thinking; for other people, glancing towards Miss Mordaunt, don’t seem to admire ’em any more than I do, and as for going for to say that Henglish arts be like fruit as is not ripe, because our sun is too cold to ripen ’em, its a sin and a shame, so it is, for there

is not no finer apples in all the world over than down in Herefordshire, where I comes from : and as for arts, I'd like to know where there is finer than our hunder-butler's."

"Reiterated peals of laughter from Mr. Hercules Marsden followed poor Betsey's indignant defence of "Henglish fruit and *arts*," but as Miss Mordaunt and Mr. Seymour maintained their gravity, though it must be confessed not without an effort, Betsey was consoled under the rudeness of Mr. Marsden. Clara would have counselled Betsey not to reply to her tormentor, but that she dreaded incurring any fresh impertinence from him, which might draw forth the reprimand of Mr. Seymour, who seemed but too prone to resent his ill-breeding.

"No one ever doubted the *art* of your under butler," resumed Mr. Marsden. "I dare be sworn he has given you many proofs of it in sundry glasses of wine, filched in the way of business."

"I must request, Mr. Marsden," interposed Mr. Seymour, "that you will not annoy a young woman, who, as a fellow traveller, is entitled to courtsey rather than incivility."

"And I must request, Mr. Seymour, that you will not dictate to me," answered Mr. Marsden, "but reserve your lessons for those better disposed to receive them."

Clara trembled, for she saw the blush of indignation crimson the lofty brow of Mr. Seymour, while the flush of fiery anger mounted to the dark cheek of Mr. Marsden. To avert a dispute, she uttered some observations on the weather.

"Yes, it is devilish cold," answered Mr. Marsden, "very different to our climate : people may say what they will, but, hang me!" (a favourite phrase of his,) "but I prefer a tropical climate, even with its disadvantages, to an English one, where the blood seems to stagnate in the veins for want of warmth to set it in motion. I hope Mr. Williamson has got plenty of stoves to heat his country house ; if not, my old dam will be frozen. She has ordered a supply of West Indian pickles, pickled salmon and prawns, to be sent down for her particular use, and trusts to find plenty of pigeons in the country, for without these luxuries a Jamaica lady cannot get on. The poor old lady was in a devilish taking, to be sure, when she found that I was determined to come by a stage-coach, instead of travelling with her, and it will take a couple of extra glasses of sangaree to console her. Your pretty face,

Miss Mordaunt, was the cause of my leaving my old dam to take care of herself; but it is not the first, and, I'll be sworn, will not be the last mischief brought about by it. 'Twas really an amusing scene this morning, to see the old lady, attended by her maid Venus, and her male-servant, Cupid, by turns weeping and expostulating, in order to induce me to travel with her;—the dread of Fetishes and Obeahs harrowing her mind, and the two niggers attempting to console her, by asserting that there are no Obeahs in England. 'No Obeahs, Missa; Obeah stay in Jamaica,' whispered Venus, showing her white teeth, while Cupid gravely declared 'Englishman hab no Obeah, him laugh at Fetish, him laugh at debil, and nebber care for noting.' ”

Betsey's face of wonder at hearing the imitation of the negroes given, *con amore*, by Mr. Hercules Marsden, was very amusing. Of a Fetish or Obeah she had never previously heard, and much was her curiosity excited as to what the terms meant; but her recollection of the former rudeness of Mr. Marsden, and a respect for Miss Mordaunt, kept her silent.

“I say, young woman, mind you don't fall in love with Cupid,” said Mr. Marsden, addressing Betsey. “He is a devil among the girls, I can tell you.”

“I knows nothing of no such gentry, sir,” answered Betsey, with amusing gravity; “and never heard of a Cupid except in a valentine, or in a picture where a fat boy with wings, and a bow and harrows, they told me was so called.”

“Then I advise you to take care of my mother's Cupid,” said Mr. Marsden, “for though he has no wings, he is very volatile, and Venus resents his amours as much as ever did the Queen of Love of old, those of his namesake. Cupid is really not a bad-looking fellow; his skin, to be sure, is dark as ebony, or, as a poet would say, *erebus*; his locks are like black wool; but what's in a complexion? as the man says in the play: his teeth are as white as the fruit of a cocoa-nut, and his tongue is as sweet as a sugar-cane. He'll soon make you believe 'him nebber, no nebber love nobody before;' you'll grow as fond of him as ever Desdemona was of the Moor. You'll become Missa Cupid, and in due time give us a little mulatto.”

“Me marry a nigger!” exclaimed the indignant Betsey. “I'd have ye to know, sir, that I'm above such hactions. I'd like to know what our hunder-butler would say to sich a thing?”

"Our hunder-butler as has sich a art," said Mr. Marsden, successfully mimicking Betsey, whose heightened colour betrayed her consciousness of his rudeness.

To prevent her replying to this impertinence, Clara addressed a question to her as to the distance of Mary Park, the seat of Mr. Williamson.

"Stratton Park is about twenty-seven miles, miss," replied Betsey. "Stratton Park is the real name of the place, miss, called after Sir Thomas Stratton, who once owned it; but Missis would call it Mary Park, because her name is Mary; and letters and parcels are continually going wrong, on account of the change of the name. Why, miss, every time as we comes down, when the post orses are put to at the alf-way house, and ready to start, the ostler says, 'To Stratton Park,' and this vexes missis so much, that she can't abide the people at that hinn; but, Lord help her! every one in the whole county calls the place Stratton Park."

"Then hang me!" said Mr. Hercules Marsden, "but I'll vex her a bit on this point, a sour-faced creature, that looks for all the world like an unripe lemon."

"Mind, sir, yon don't tell missis nothing of my having said anything about the old name of the place, for it would be as much as my place is worth; not that I cares much about my sitivation, but as our hunder-butler says, 'a rolling stone gathers no moss.'"

"You have never been to Mr. Williamson's country-house, I presume?" said Mr. Seymour to Miss Mordaunt. "It is, I am told, a fine place."

Clara having answered in the negative, a few observations relative to a country life were exchanged between them, offered on his side with a deferential politeness, indicative of a profound respect, and acknowledged on hers by a dignified but reserved good breeding.

"Well now, hang me! if to see you two exchanging ceremony, one would not fancy that you never had an half hour's chat before in all your lives," said Mr. Hercules Marsden.

"Though I do not acknowledge your right to question or conjecture," observed Mr. Seymour, "to prevent the possibility of Miss Mordaunt's name being mixed up in any erroneous supposition of yours, I beg to inform you, that until yesterday I never had the honour of seeing her."

"Well then, all I can say," answered Mr. Hercules Mars-

den, "is, that considering you never met till yesterday, it strikes me as being not a little odd, that the young lady speaks to you as civilly as if you were old acquaintances, while to me, who have met her more than once, she will hardly vouchsafe a word, and that word uttered with such a proud look, as if she took me for one of my mother's niggers. She behaves just as uncivilly to me, as that cross bedizened Mrs. Williamson does to her."

This remark brought the blood to the cheeks of Clara; and on involuntarily encountering the eyes of Mr. Seymour, so deep a sympathy was expressed in them, that hers sunk beneath their tender gaze.

"She would be ten times happier living as a companion with my old dam," resumed Mr. Marsden, "for the old one is, after all, a devilish good-natured woman, and not too fond of her money. She has taken a vast fancy to Miss Mordaunt, and, for the matter of that, so have I; but she prefers, why I cannot imagine, staying with the spiteful ill-natured Mrs. Williamson, and her tiresome young ones, to coming to live with us."

"I must request you not to speak disrespectfully of Mrs. Williamson or her children, in my presence," said Clara; a request that would probably have only called forth a still more severe censure against that lady, had not the coach stopped at the porter's lodge of a large park, which was announced by Betsey to be that of Mr. Williamson.

This lodge might well have served as an illustration of the taste of its mistress: presenting an epitome of the Grecian, Roman, and Gothic style of architecture, so mingled as to render the building perfectly ridiculous. The pure Doric columns, supported by acroteria, were chequered by fluted ones, with capitals of the Composite order, and the windows and door were in pointed arches, decorated in the style of the florid Gothic, with stained glass panes, on which were emblazoned the family arms, intermingled with mitred bishops and saints, radiant in all the prismatic hues with which modern art endeavours to copy the more glowing tints sent down to us by the Middle Ages.

The porter sallied forth to open the gate, but seeing that the vehicle that stopped before it was only a stage coach, he scarcely deigned to throw open the portals, and condescended not to touch his hat to the lady and gentlemen who descended.

from it, much less to assist them in removing any portion of their luggage, which the guard flung, rather than placed, on the outside of it.

“Why, I say, Muster Dawkins, why don’t you lend a hand to remove this ere luggage from off the public road?” asked Betsey in a rather querulous tone, on observing that this surly Cerberus made no attempt to assist her in the operation.

“Vy, because it is none of my business,” replied he. “I vas not hired to vait upon the hupper servants, nor vill I do it.”

Mr. Seymour immediately removed Miss Mordaunt’s trunk, and his own, inside the gate, while Betsey, displaying no inconsiderable strength, bore hers, giving vent at the same time to her wonder, that “some people could not discover the difference between real gentry and hupper servants.”

Mr. Seymour, having placed Clara’s and his own luggage in safety within the gates, ran to assist Betsey, and in spite of her repeated assertions, that “these ere boxes was not by no means heavy,” insisted on bearing them.

“Well, now, if that’s not a good one, however,” said Mr. Marsden, “just as if that strong-built wench was not able to remove the trunks herself. Catch me at helping one of those red-armed creatures! If it was Miss Mordaunt, indeed, I should’nt mind it; but for Mrs. Betsey, I should just as soon think of assisting one of our nigger girls at Jamaica.”

Betsey’s cheeks flushed, and her eyes sparkled with anger at hearing this rude speech; but Miss Mordaunt’s appealing look silenced the indignant retort to which she was about to give utterance. Her rage, directed from this channel, rushed like pent water impetuously into another, and she assailed the porter with no little vivacity of tongue.

“Yes, you are right,” interrupted Mr. Marsden; “he must be a rare spooney indeed, not to be able to distinguish between a gentlemen like me and an upper servant,—and I’ll tell his master of his impertinence, that I will, I can tell him.”

“Vy, sir, I hasks your pardon, but if I had a knowed as how you vas a gemman, I vould’nt have made no hobjection to carrying that ere luggage; but as missis changes her hupper servants so hoften, and that some of them there chaps comes down here as smart as can be, vy, I thought as how you and this here gemman vas newly ired, and come in the places of t’ others.”

“You’re a stupid blockhead, that you are,” said Mr. Mars-

den, drawing forth his well-filled purse, and throwing the porter a sovereign, "but take that, and it will teach you whether I am a gentleman or not. Ay, you pick it up fast enough, I warrant me: there is nothing like gold to convince you John Bulls that a man is a gentleman. What else did that fellow Shakspeare mean, when he talked of buying golden opinions from all sorts of men? You resemble the niggers uncommonly in that respect, I can tell you;" and so saying, he threw a glance of ineffable contempt at the porter, who stood, hat in hand, bowing low, and making apologies, and then strode after Clara and Mr. Seymour towards the house.

The freshness of the air and the beauty of the park, which not all the incongruous buildings, in the shape of temple, hermitage, tower, and ruin, with which the bad taste of Mrs. Williamson had intersected it, could destroy, produced a feeling of pleasure in Clara, to which her mind had long been a stranger, pent up as she had been in the cheerless atmosphere of a back attic in Brook Street. Those only who love the country, and have for a considerable period been condemned to a residence in a city, can imagine the gratification she felt as the light breeze fanned her cheek, and played amid her tresses, and her feet trod the elastic turf, over which many a majestic oak and spreading chestnut-tree threw their wide shadow. The carols of the birds too, and even the cawing of the rooks, stole pleasantly on her ear, and as a pheasant flew from out a cover, or a hare bounded across the grass, she felt some portion of the delight with which the sight of similar objects and scenes had formerly been wont to inspire her. But soon came the memory of the happy past, recalled by the picture before her. The happy past, when she wandered through a beautiful park, unspoilt by bad taste, leaning on the arm of a doting father, or supporting that of a not less affectionate aunt,—when every face she met beamed on her with smiles of gratitude, and every tongue blessed her. Now, a stranger, a dependant, condemned to eat the bitter bread of servitude; she who had so often lightened the sense of it in others!

Tears filled her eyes, and her changeful cheek told of the deep emotion she vainly endeavoured to conceal; but they passed not unheeded, for they were marked with a lively interest by Mr. Seymour, though delicacy precluded him from giving utterance to his thoughts. No such feeling operated on Mr. Marsden, who, having advanced close to her, stared

rudely on her face, and, giving a loud whistle to arouse her from her abstraction, exclaimed—

“Why, hang me if she’s not crying! what on earth have you been saying to vex her? I dare say she’s been asking you to marry her, and that you have refused; for marriage is no joke after all, however one may like a pretty girl. For the matter of that, there is nothing I wouldn’t do for Miss Mor-daunt, except marry her; so don’t be cast down, miss; who knows but you may yet find some one with less sense than our friend here, who may put a ring on your finger in a lawful way.”

Further observations were prevented by their arrival at the mansion, to the great relief of Clara, who, having noticed the indignant glances of Mr. Seymour, dreaded his engaging in any altercation with her vulgar persecutor on her account, feeling convinced that such an event would only tend to confirm him in the absurd suspicions which he had adopted. Never in her most prosperous days had Clara been treated with so profound a respect as by Mr. Seymour; and she felt it the more deeply from having latterly been subjected to such insult from Mr. Marsden and rudeness from Mrs. Williamson. A sense of his unobtrusive good-breeding unconsciously marked her manner as she bade him farewell in the vestibule, and rapidly followed Betsey to the apartment designed for her, anxious to escape the impertinence of Mr. Marsden.

On arriving at her chamber, which was an attic, the windows of which opened into the stable-yard, a feeling of depression stole over Clara, for she had hoped that in so large a mansion an apartment might be assigned to her commanding a view of the green fields and majestic trees, to the sight of which she had been so long a stranger that her eyes had dwelt on them with the delight experienced on meeting old friends after a lengthened separation.

An inexplicable sympathy between the beauties of nature and the human heart exists, when that heart has never been vitiated by passion, or sullied by crime; and never is this sympathy so powerfully felt as when the sentiments of kindness, repelled by those with whom we are brought in contact, seek to expand themselves towards all that excite pleasurable emotions. Then it is that the blue vault above us, and the green turf beneath, the umbrageous trees, the rippling waters, and the flower-enamelled meads, seem as friends to whom we turn, and never in vain, for consolation, for sympathy.

Betsey observed the look of disappointment of Miss Mordaunt on entering her chamber, and said, "Ah! miss, I thought as how you wouldn't much like being mewed up here; the governess before the last used to sigh every time she looked towards the window, because she could not see the park. The gardener placed a few plants in these here windows, that she might have something green to look at; but the young ladies soon broke 'em to pieces, because they prevented 'em from seeing what was going on in the stable-yard.—Well, she was a poor mild meek creature, no more fit to master our young ladies than a new-born babe; and they did torment her cruelly, that's certain. Many's the time I've seed her, with the tears a-running down her pale cheeks, though she never complained to no one, and Mrs. Popkins was always a-getting her into trouble, by one story or another. When Miss Williamson said something about what she saw the stable people do, her mamma scolded poor Miss Ellison terribly, and blamed her for letting the young ladies mix with the grooms, nor would she believe that what they knew of the stable-yard, they learned only by looking out of the windows, whenever poor Miss Ellison's back was turned. This was Mrs. Popkins's doing, who never can abide no governess, saying, 'as how they are neither fish or flesh, lady or servant.'—But lord, miss! here am I chattering away, instead of going to get you a morsel of lunch,"—and she hastily left the room, leaving Clara to reflect on the picture conjured up by her description of the luckless Miss Ellison, whose meek spirit and pale face, bedewed with tears, created a tender sympathy in the mind of her successor.

As Miss Mordaunt cast her eyes around on the soiled paper that covered the room, and the wretched articles that so scantily furnished it, she thought how frequently the tearful eyes of her predecessor had glanced over the same objects, and the chamber assumed a sanctity in her mind, as having been the scene of human suffering—of meek resignation. Blessed power of commiseration! that can steal us from the sense of our own trials to sympathize with those of others—thou art a boon denied to the selfish, whose morbid indulgence of personal discontents shuts out the salutary influence of pity for aught save—self!

Mrs. Williamson and the young ladies arrived only in time for the former to dress for a late dinner, and her pupils

rushed rather than walked to the school-room, where they loudly complained of hunger, and vociferated their demands for mutton chops.

“And mind, Betsey,” said Miss Williamson, “that you coax the butler to give us some strong beer.”

“Do, pray,” repeated Laura. And even the little Arabella lisped forth, “do get us some strong beer, ’t is so dood.”

“You will bring table-beer only for the young ladies,” said Miss Mordaunt. At which command her pupils looked not a little disconcerted, though they ventured not to express their disapprobation.

As usual, Miss Mordaunt and her elder pupil were summoned to the dessert; and, as usual, the former was received with kindness by Mr. Williamson, and with a haughty nod of the head by his wife. The civility of offering wine and fruit to Clara having been gone through, Mr. Williamson remarked on the strangeness of Mrs. Marsden’s non-arrival.

“I cannot account for it,” said he; “for unless she has changed her intention of coming, or has taken a wrong road, she would have been here long ago.”

“Probably she did not like travelling without the protection of her son,” remarked the hostess, looking spitefully at Clara; “and I must say, that I think it was neither correct nor, indeed, excusable, for any one to induce Mr. Hercules Marsden to abandon his mother to travel by herself in a country where she is a stranger.”

“Why, who induced him?” asked Mr. Williamson, with a countenance so expressive of unsuspicion, that Clara at once saw that he was unaware that Mr. Marsden had travelled in the same coach with her, and had forgotten that gentleman’s announcement of such an intention at his table the day before.

“If you require any information on this point, I refer you to Miss Mordaunt,” replied Mrs. Williamson; “*she* can best explain Mr. Marsden’s movements.”

The good-natured host raised his eyes to her face with a look of perfect astonishment, while the blush of wounded delicacy at this public impeachment of her conduct dyed the cheek of Clara.

Mr. Seymour was on the point of defending her from the implied imputation, when the sound of carriage-wheels advancing towards the house was heard, and, in a few minutes after, Mrs. Marsden rushed into the room, and, disregarding

the rest of the persons present, threw her arms around the neck of her son, mingling expressions of delight at again seeing him, with reproaches at his desertion, and the sufferings it had imposed on her.

“Oh, my dear boy! how happy I am to embrace you once more. You cruel creatur, how horrid it was of you to have left me, and in a strange country too; and you, miss—I forget your name—would it not have been kinder of you to have accepted my offer of coming to live with me, when you and my son, too, might have travelled down here in the same carriage with me, than to have let him desert me, to come in the stage-coach with you?”

“You see I was right, Mr. Williamson,” said that gentleman’s spouse, with an air of satisfied malice.

“No, you were not right,” interrupted Mrs. Marsden, not at all knowing to what the observation of her hostess referred, “for you told me, nay, you even wrote it down, that the name of your place was Mary Park; and when I came to the post-town next this, some hours ago, and Cupid told the postillions to drive to Mary Park, the people at the inn said they knew no such person. I explained that it was a place, and not a person, and told them it was to Mrs. Williamson’s I meant to go; and they confessed there was a gentleman of that name who lived at Stratton Park, five or six miles off, but knew no one else of that name in the neighbourhood. I said it was impossible it could be where I wanted to go; for, said I, the mistress of a house must surely know its name, and so we went on three or four more long stages, when it occurred to me, that as Mrs. Williamson said her country-seat was only twenty-seven miles from London, we must have come more than twice that distance, and so we turned back to the inn where we had changed horses so many hours before, and, not knowing what else to do, desired the postillions to drive to Stratton Park, which, as I find you here, must be, after all, the right name of the place; so I wonder you gave me a wrong direction.”

“I told you, my dear, that your changing the name of our place would lead to many mistakes,” said the host.

“And I repeat that no mistakes could occur, if people would take the trouble to read the name painted on the gates,” replied his wife, looking not a little indignant at his observation.

“Why, as to reading the names of places,” interrupted Mrs. Marsden; “they all seem to me to have the same name, for I saw written up ‘Steel Traps’ at every country seat we passed. Now, how is a stranger to distinguish between so many different country seats all named alike?”

This naïve observation excited a general laugh, on which Mrs. Marsden remarked, “Well, you English are the drollest people in the world, though represented to be naturally grave, and more prone to giggle than even the niggers are with us. Why, at every inn where we changed horses, and through every village where we passed, the folk did nothing but grin, shout aloud with rude mirth, and point to Cupid and Venus on the coach-box, as if they never had seen two people of colour before; and the poor creatures were so mortified and ashamed, that I quite pitied them.”

“I thought how it would be, mother,” said her hopeful son to Mrs. Marsden, “when you were making such ridiculous figures of the two blackies,” and here he indulged in a peal of laughter at the recollection of the dresses she had provided for them in London.

“Hercules, you ought to be ashamed of yourself to laugh in the face of your own mother, that you ought; and as for the dresses, what could be more genteel?”

“Why, didn’t I tell you that Cupid’s black face, peeping out from a flaxen wig would set the whole country laughing?”

“And didn’t I see with my own eyes all the smartest carriages in London driven by servants in flaxen wigs? And, therefore, as Cupid was to sit on the box, why not have him dressed as well as those I had seen?”

“Mother, you will be the death of me,” interrupted Mr. Marsden, still continuing to laugh most boisterously. “Only fancy, Mr. Seymour, a nigger with a white wig, a silver laced hat, a sky blue coat lined with scarlet, a waistcoat and unmentionables of scarlet likewise, white stockings, and shoes and silver buckles, and a gold headed cane in his hand to complete the picture.”

“And what could be more genteel, I should like to know?” demanded Mrs. Marsden: “why, it was exactly, and in every particular, like the dress that I saw worn by a nobleman’s coachman in London, except that in place of a gold-headed cane, he had a whip. The whole dress pleased me so much, that I ordered Cupid’s to be precisely like it.”

Even Mr. Williamson, though little given to mirth, could not resist laughing at the naïve acknowledgement of Mrs. Marsden, and his hilarity was increased when Mr. Marsden related, that not only did his mother copy the livery of a nobleman in London, but absolutely wanted to have the arms and coronet on his carriage painted on hers.

“And why not, if it pleased me?” demanded she. “Wasn’t my money as good as his? and so I told the jackanapes of a coachmaker, when he objected to copy them. I’ve no notion of the Harry-stockrycy, as these same noblemen are called, thinking no one is to have a crown on his carriage except them; for, to my thinking, all who can pay for it ought to have what they like painted on their chaises.”

“And so you carried the point about the crown as you call it?” asked her son.

“To be sure I did,” replied the lady, triumphantly. “And when the coachmaker asked me if I was a wife or a widow, saying that that made a difference, for if I was a widow, I must have the arms in a lozenge, I told him I’d have no such thing, for I couldn’t abide lozenges, though they might be good for a cough, but that I’d have a sugar-cane painted instead, as ’twas by sugar-canes I had come by my fortune. He stared like a stuck pig, and began to grin; but I told him I’d have no carriage from him unless he painted the crown and sugar-cane on it. Then he asked ‘if I had no arms?’—‘Why, are you blind, man?’ said I; ‘don’t you see ’em?’ and I held out mine, and then he grinned again, and I got angry. So says he, ‘madam, it is the general custom for widows to have their arms painted in a lozenge on their carriages, or else to have their cypher.’—I couldn’t make head or tail out of all this, so then he asked me what was my name, and I told him Bessy Marsden. Then said he, ‘I will put the letters B. M. under the coronet,’ I think he called it,—‘but I once more beg leave to inform you, madam, that no ladies have a right to a coronet except ladies of rank.’ ‘Right, or no right, I will have it,’ says I.”

“Yes,” interrupted her son, laughing loudly, “and I told you before his face that the cypher B. M. would stand for Betty Martin, which, as your right to a coronet was all my eye, would be very appropriate.”

“You need not remind me of your rudeness,” said Mrs. Marsden, “for I remember it full well, and also how the

coachmaker began to giggle at your speech. He must have thought you a nice dutiful son, that he must; but what would people say if they knew that ever since that day you seldom call me by any name but Betty Martin?"

"But you have not told us, mother, how Venus was dressed to take her seat on the box?" asked Mr. Marsden, winking at Mr. Seymour, who, disgusted at seeing his endeavours to turn his parent into ridicule, looked unusually grave and repulsive.

"She was dressed quite genteelly, I can tell you," replied the lady. "She wore a straw-coloured silk bonnet, with pink roses inside, a pea-green silk gown, a crimson China crape shawl, a pair of mosaic gold bracelets, and had a pink parasol in one hand, and a bright yellow reticule in the other."

"Oh! ye gods, ye gods, hear this," exclaimed Mr. Hercules Marsden, "a straw-coloured bonnet with red roses, coming in delicate contact with a nigger's face; and seated by this delectable creature, fancy Cupid in a flaxen wig, and sky-coloured and scarlet livery. Oh! I shall die with laughing at the mere notion," and, suiting the action to the words, he indulged in the most uproarious mirth. "And yet my mother sees nothing ridiculous in all this, and is astonished that the people laughed outright at every village and post-house they passed on their route."

"How can you be so unfeeling as to laugh at what gave these poor faithful creatures pain?" said Mrs. Marsden. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Hercules, that you ought. I'm sure I quite felt for them when they came whimpering to me, complaining at the inn where we stopped to dine, that while they were partaking their repast, all the people of the house came around them laughing and giggling in their faces."

Mrs. Marsden having declined any refreshment before tea, Mrs. Williamson adjourned to the drawing-room, and before arriving at the door of which, she addressed Miss Mordaunt in the *brusque* and uncivil tone always adopted by her towards Clara, with a reproach for the impropriety of her travelling in the same coach with Mr. Hercules Marsden.

"I wholly disapprove such conduct, though, I must add, I am not surprised at it."

"Let me explain to you, madam, that the presence of Mr. Marsden was as unexpected as disagreeable to me."

“Then why travel in the same carriage? Were you compelled to select the precise coach that he came by, when there are no less than nine that pass my gate? Come, come, Miss Mordaunt, I am not to be imposed on so easily.”

“Really, madam, I was not prepared for this insult,—this cruel and unfounded imputation on my conduct,” and tears rushed into the eyes of Clara.

“I beg, Miss Mordaunt, that you will not forget yourself. I never permit any one in my establishment to answer me; I think it very improper and impertinent;” and so saying, Mrs. Williamson haughtily turned from the weeping girl, whose feelings she had so deeply wounded, and entered the drawing-room.

Miss Williamson, who had been a witness to the unmerited censure bestowed on Clara by her mother, good-naturedly took the hand of her governess, and, with a well-meant attempt at consolation, begged her not “to mind her ma.”

“She is so unjust and cross,” said the young lady, “that no one can please her.”

“I must entreat, Miss Williamson, that you never make any reflections on your mother,” interrupted Clara.

“Well, now, if this is not too bad,” replied the angry girl. “You know, as well as I do, that she scolded you unjustly, and, what is more, *she* knows it too, for she sent for Betsey the moment we came out of the carriage, and asked her fifty questions about your meeting Mr. Marsden; and Betsey told her that it was *he* who came into the coach, were you were trying to hide yourself in the corner from him, and that you hardly made him an answer when he spoke to you. Now, isn’t it hard when I pity you, and take your part, that you snub instead of thanking me; but I’ll not be such a fool in future, I can tell you, though I would love you dearly if you would let me; but I don’t like falseness, and I can’t bear to hear you defending ma, when you know she is wrong.”

Our heroine was touched with the kindness of heart evinced by her pupil, though she gently but firmly reproved her for permitting her tongue to utter a censure on her parents; and seldom had she felt more embarrassed than when that young lady logically pleaded the right to condemn injustice and falsehood whenever they were met.

“Why, doesn’t ma send Popkins every day to ask questions of Betsey about you? and doesn’t she torment my sisters and

me every opportunity she can get to find out all about you? O! I could tell you such things, only you told me never to mention what ma said or did."

This prohibition Clara firmly but kindly enforced on the present occasion, to the no slight surprise and not less indignation of Miss Williamson, who could neither comprehend nor render justice to the motives that dictated her conduct.

Clara passed nearly a sleepless night in her new chamber. Reflections on the discomfort of her situation, and a consciousness of the difficulty, if not impossibility, of long retaining it, would have precluded slumber, had that blessing not been rendered impracticable by the snoring of her three pupils, which, though accustomed to it, seemed more loud and disagreeable to her than usual. When Betsey entered the chamber at an early hour next morning, she found Miss Mordaunt, with heavy eyes, pallid cheeks, and a countenance wearing an expression of such deep sadness, that her warm interest and sympathy were excited.

"Lor love you, miss! I hope you beant hill, you look for all the world as if you hadn't had a wink of sleep all night; you surely never could go for to mind what missis says when she is in her tantarums; and she's pretty often in them, as we all knows."

"My good Betsey, I must remind you that it is highly improper to comment on Mrs. Williamson to any one, but more especially to me."

"Well, miss, that's the way with you; you never will allow any one to tell you the plots, and schemes, and wickedness that's going on, not even those as takes your part."

"Pray, Betsey, say no more on this subject."

"Very well, miss, but I knows what I knows; only it's no use—you won't listen to one."

Seeing that Miss Mordaunt was about to repeat her prohibition, Betsey checked her loquaciousness on the forbidden subject, and informing Miss Mordaunt that it was a beautiful morning, advised her to take the young ladies into the park for the benefit of the fresh air, which would do good to her head-ach.

Her pupils having urged this measure with all the juvenile impatience of children to revisit their favourite haunts, she accompanied them to the pleasure-grounds, into which they had no sooner entered, than they rushed with glad hearts and

buoyant steps, so rapidly along, that she found it impossible to keep pace with them, and they were soon out of her sight. In vain she called to them to stop; they either heard not or heeded not her voice, and although she pursued them as quickly as she could, the little Arabella was the only one she succeeded in overtaking.

Flushed and fatigued, she sank panting into a seat in the shrubbery, forcibly retaining Arabella, who urged every entreaty to be allowed to join her sisters, and tried to disengage her little dimpled hand from that of Clara, when suddenly Mr. Seymour advanced towards her from the direction which her pupils had taken. He saluted her with an observance of respect more profound than that with which he would have greeted any one of her sex, notwithstanding no man entertained a higher opinion of the aimable portion of it than he did; and this respectful demeanour, while it gratified, placed her at her ease.

Having explained her anxiety at the *escapade* of her elder pupils, he instantly offered to go in search of them, and soon returned, leading back the truant girls, who promised their governess not again to desert her.

Clara pursued her promenade with them, and still Mr. Seymour lingered by her side. He spoke of the beauty of the scenery of the park, which he had explored previously to having encountered her, talked of books, praising many of those she most preferred, and discovered a taste so perfectly in harmony with her own, though his opinions were expressed before hers were pronounced, that she felt at once flattered and gratified by the similarity.

Nearly an hour had fled rapidly away, our heroine almost unconscious of the velocity of its flight, and Mr. Seymour totally so, when, on retracing their steps towards the house, Mr. Marsden issued from another path, and stood before them.

“And so I have caught you at last, Miss Mordaunt? and, as I expected, with Mr. Seymour. A pretty walk truly you have given me. This is your prudery and propriety, is it? You, who hardly deigned to answer me when I spoke to you, can go rambling about with this gentleman?”

Seeing the blushes of offended modesty mantle the cheek of Clara, Mr. Seymour instantly addressed her tormentor.

“Though your opinion, sir, must be, I suppose, as unim-

portant to Miss Mordaunt as I confess it is to me, I cannot suffer you to remain in error as to our rencontre this morning, which was purely accidental."

"Come, come! I'm not so credulous as you take me to be, Mr. Seymour."

"Sir, I am not accustomed to have the veracity of any assertion of mine questioned," and looking contemptuously at Mr. Marsden, "nor will I permit it."

"I must entreat, Mr. Seymour, that you will enter into no discussion on my account," interrupted Clara, shocked and terrified at the probability of a quarrel; "permit me to return to the house, attended only by my pupils," and, curtsying to Mr. Seymour, she advanced towards the mansion.

"Hang me! if you escape so readily, now that I have found you," said Mr. Marsden, and he moved in pursuit of her; but Mr. Seymour arrested his progress, and demanded a few minutes' conversation with him.

"Not at present; I must speak to Miss Mordaunt, now that I have found her, for in the house there is no catching an opportunity to say a word to her;" and he broke from Mr. Seymour and rapidly pursued the young lady, who was hurrying towards the house.

The sound of his voice calling to her to stop only served to accelerate her speed; but vain were her efforts to escape her tormentor, who rudely seized her cloak just as, turning an angle in the shrubbery, little Arabella fell to the ground, uttering piercing shrieks, and her sisters increased the child's terror, by loudly expressing their pity for her. While Miss Mordaunt wiped the gravel from the bruised face of the sobbing child, Mr. Marsden tauntingly reminded her that the accident was wholly to be attributed to her obstinacy in shunning his presence. "Did you expect that I should bite you?" asked he; a question which set both the elder pupils of Clara into a boisterous laugh, and renewed afresh the tears of little Arabella, who murmured, "The naughty man will bite poor Miss Mordaunt! O dear! O dear!"

Clara was commencing an angry remonstrance with Mr. Marsden, when Mr. Williamson appeared, who, seeing the bruised and bleeding face of his child, demanded an explanation.

"O! papa, we have had such fun," exclaimed Miss Williamson, interrupting the sentence Clara had commenced; "Miss

Mordaunt likes to walk only with Mr. Seymour, and Mr. Marsden wanted to make her walk with him, and she would not, and so she ran away, and he ran after us. Oh! 't was such good sport; and just as Mr. Marsden caught Miss Mordaunt, poor Arabella fell down and hurt herself, and so——"

"It is really very wrong to run in such a giddy manner with the children, Miss Mordaunt," said Mr. Williamson, gravely.

"And that naughty man," interrupted little Arabella, still weeping, "said he would bite poor Miss Mordaunt. Don't let him bite her, papa."

This speech set the two elder girls laughing again, and while they indulged in their boisterous mirth, in which Mr. Marsden as loudly participated, Mr. Seymour came up to the party.

"I must request, Miss Mordaunt, that in future you will not run with my children," said Mr. Williamson, "and I must entreat both these gentlemen not to join you in your walks."

"Capital! excellent! well done, old boy!" said Mr. Marsden, slapping him on the shoulder; "you wish that no man but yourself should escort this lady, and hang me if I can blame you, for that is precisely my own feeling."

Mr. Williamson reddened partly with shame and partly with anger, and Mr. Marsden, observing the effect produced by his impudent and unfounded insinuation, rubbed his hands, and laughed louder than before, uttering, "Well done, old boy! let no one walk with Miss Mordaunt but yourself."

"O! how funny; he calls our pa 'old boy!'" said Miss Williamson to her sister; "is n't it good sport to hear our pa called 'old boy?'"

Clara retraced her steps to the house, deeply mortified at the ludicrous scene in which she had been compelled to enact so prominent a part, and hurt at the disadvantageous impression which she felt persuaded it must have made on Mr. Williamson.

The young ladies had not long been in the *boudoir* of their mamma, where they paid a daily visit, when Mrs. Popkins, the *femme de chambre* of that lady, abruptly entered the apartment allotted to Clara, and informed her that her presence was required immediately by Mrs. Williamson.

"You had better be quick, for Mrs. Williamson is not in a humour to wait patiently, I can promise you," said Mrs. Popkins, with a toss of her head, and a smile so indicative of mis-

chief, that not all her consciousness of innocence could prevent Miss Mordaunt from anticipating that some fresh annoyance awaited her, the dread of which made her shrink with dismay from the coming interview. Nor was the countenance of Mrs. Williamson at all calculated to quiet the alarm of Clara, for her colour, never delicate, had assumed a hue approaching to crimson, and her eyes gleamed with more than ordinary animation. The children looked like culprits detected in some crime, and cast penitential glances towards their governess, as if to deprecate her wrath.

"Upon my word, Miss Mordaunt, your conduct surprises me," were the first words uttered by the lady. "I could not have imagined that any young person, with pretensions to modesty, could be guilty of such glaring impropriety."

"I am not aware, madam——"

"Not a fiddlestick—it is no use your endeavouring to deceive me."

"I beg leave to assure you, madam," replied Clara, "that I am incapable of attempting to deceive any one." And the natural dignity with which she repelled the insult offered to her checked for a moment the insolence of Mrs. Williamson.

"Do you mean to say," demanded she, "that you have not permitted Mr. Seymour to walk with you? a pretty business indeed, to have my children's minds corrupted by listening to your flirtation."

"It is true, madam, that Mr. Seymour did join us; but the encounter was purely accidental."

"Oh! of course, just what I expected you would say. But why not tell Mr. Seymour that you did not wish him to walk with you?"

The question embarrassed Clara so much that her cheeks became suffused with blushes, which Mrs. Williamson observing, said—

"You may well be ashamed of yourself—setting up, forsooth, for a fine lady, and running about the pleasure-grounds all the morning with a gentleman, just as Miss Webster or Miss Preston, or any of the other young ladies of large fortune that we ask down here, might do. What may not be wrong in them is decidedly so in you. You are not on an equality with Mr. Seymour, who is a young man of family, and heir to a good fortune. The young ladies I have named know that they will meet here none but persons eligible to

become their husbands ; therefore they may meet in the pleasure-grounds of a morning, and indulge in a little love-making : but it is very different with you, who receive a salary to instruct and take care of my girls, and to whom no young man of family or expectations can pay attention, except with dishonourable motives."

The heart of Clara swelled with the feelings of insulted pride and wounded delicacy, as she listened to this vulgar tirade. Her memory reverted to those days of the past, when, mistress of a fine mansion, and supposed to be the heiress to immense wealth, she had been admired and followed, but with such respectful homage, that the idea of being suspected of giving encouragement to flirtations never could have entered her head. Yet now, she heard herself accused of this unworthy conduct—nay, heard it asserted that she, born of gentle blood, and nurtured in the lap of luxury, could never more be addressed by gentlemen, except with dishonourable motives.

Never had poverty appeared so humiliating, so bitter, as at this moment, when all the affronts to which it exposes its victims were thus coarsely revealed. Yet, while her spirit struggled beneath the wound aimed at her pride, she remembered with a warmer sentiment than gratitude, that even in her present dependent situation, she had been approached by one man, and that one highly gifted, and, as she now learned, well born, and with good expectations, with a more profound respect than she had ever remarked in any of the numerous adorers who had formerly sought to conciliate her regard. But short was the duration of the kindling glow that warmed her heart at this recollection, for soon came the doubt, that as the consciousness of the humiliation of her present position might naturally induce her to overrate the courtesy of Mr. Seymour, so the brilliancy of her former one might have caused her to depreciate the attentions formerly paid to her.

The doubts forced on a generous and frank nature by the hard lessons of adversity are perhaps not the least trying of its inflictions. Prone, as even the least vain are, to believe in the sincerity of the homage offered to them, how humiliating must be the reflection, that not to herself, but to the position occupied by her, were these marks of respect paid. These thoughts passed painfully through the mind of Clara, and while they did so, Mrs. Williamson continued to look at her with an expression of malicious satisfaction that appalled her,

when, awakening from her reverie, she met the fixed stare of the mother of her pupils.

“Well, Miss Mordaunt, you seem, and well you may be, confounded at the folly and impropriety of your conduct. As you seem conscious of your faults, I will for this time overlook them, but remember, that I will permit no more clandestine interviews with gentlemen.”

“If I have not expressed my sense of the injustice of the charges preferred against me, madam,” replied Clara, “it is that my astonishment and, permit me to add, my indignation at such charges have deprived me of the power of so doing.”

“Come, come, Miss Mordaunt, your high-flown airs are quite lost on me, or rather provoke my anger. I repeat, that a continuance in the improper conduct I have censured will compel me to dismiss you, and, what is more, will preclude the possibility of my giving you a character.”

Had Clara obeyed the dictates of pride, she would have that moment resigned the situation she held in the family of Mrs. Williamson, but the recollection of the scanty pittance of her aunt, and the additional embarrassment which her maintenance would entail on that excellent woman, checked the expression of her feelings; and though she could not repress the explanation which, in justice to herself, was due, she offered it with such moderation and gentleness, that Mrs. Williamson forbore to express any further doubts of her conduct.

When Clara found herself again alone with her pupils, Miss Williamson deprecatingly assured her that mamma asked so many questions, that she was forced to answer them.

“It was that ill-natured Popkins that made mamma so cross,” continued the young lady; “for Arabella told the under-housemaid that Mr. Marsden wanted to bite you; the under-housemaid repeated it to Popkins, who told it to mamma; and mamma would have it that Mr. Marsden had been kissing you, though I told her he had not.”

My readers shall be spared the lesson given by Miss Mordaunt to her pupil, on the impropriety of repeating conversations, and the puzzling rejoinders of that young lady, as to what course could be adopted between telling the truth when questioned, or being guilty of falsehood; suffice it to say, that Clara felt that without conveying a severe censure on the parent, she would not draw the line of distinction to the child,

and this reflection induced her to evade the subject as soon as possible.

The usual summons to the *salle à manger* found Miss Mordaunt less than ever disposed to obey it. She shrunk from again encountering the insolent familiarity of Mr. Hercules Marsden, the not less insolent hauteur of Mrs. Williamson, and the generous sympathy which she felt certain of meeting from Mr. Seymour. She was not prepared for the total change which marked the manner of Mr. Williamson, hitherto so kind; the cold sternness of his reception both shocked and pained her. Mrs. Williamson, too, appeared conscious of the change, for she asked with more of curiosity than good-nature, "why he did not, as usual, offer Miss Mordaunt wine or fruit?" The face of the good man became positively red at the question; but, to evade further notice, he instantly poured out some wine, which he placed before Clara, and then pushed a dish of grapes and biscuits towards her.

"I say, old boy, do not bear malice," said Mr. Marsden; at which speech the countenance of his host became perfectly crimson.

"Bear malice! and for what, pray?" demanded Mrs. Williamson.

"O! I never tell tales out of school, do I?" asked Mr. Marsden, with a most provoking glance, first at Mr. Williamson, and then at Clara. "No I never make mischief."

"What does all this mystery mean, Mr. Williamson? Miss Mordaunt, I insist on knowing what Mr. Marsden refers to?" said Mrs. Williamson, angrily.

"Never ask questions, my dear Mrs. Williamson," said Mrs. Marsden; "it does no good, quite the contrary. Ah! if you knew what I had to suffer with the father of Hercules! such doings, such mysteries! Young niggers brought to me as like him in the face as two sugar-canes, and I sending to all the Obeah-women around to find out who was really the father. Never ask questions, for it does no good."

This pacific counsel, far from producing its desired effect, only served to increase the anger and curiosity of Mrs. Williamson, who kept looking alternately from her husband to Clara, both of whose countenances displayed visible signs of embarrassment.

"Why, I repeat," demanded Mrs. Williamson, "should my husband bear malice against Miss Mordaunt?"

“ I dare say, mamma,” replied Miss Williamson, “ it is for walking with Mr. Seymour, for Mr. Marsden said, papa (and he called him old boy, too) could not bear to have any one walk or talk with Miss Mordaunt but himself.”

Vain would be the attempt to describe the effect produced by this disclosure on the faces of the persons interested in it. Clara’s became crimsoned with shame, and then turned pale as marble; Mr. Williamson’s state of embarrassment it was really painful to witness; but Mrs. Williamson’s countenance, flushed with rage and jealousy, bore evidence of the rising tumult of her feelings.

“ And so *this* is the reason that you did not, as usual, press and coax your favourite to take wine?” said the enraged wife. “ You may well be ashamed of yourself, you base man!”—and here a torrent of tears forced themselves from her eyes.

“ I beg to be permitted to retire,” said Clara. “ Come, Miss Williamson.”

“ She shall *not* go with you—a vile, ungrateful ——” and tears and sobs precluded the completion of the sentence.

Clara rose to leave the room, but before she had reached the door, Mr. Seymour addressed Mrs. Williamson with no less dignity than discretion, offering an explanation of the circumstance that had excited her anger. Vain were his efforts to appease the fury of the jealous wife, who persisted in accusing her husband and Clara of the most improper conduct; nor were her unfounded suspicions lightened by the good-natured but injudicious advice of Mrs. Marsden, to “ submit to this trial as patiently as *she* had done, when poor dear Mr. Marsden inflicted still greater ones on her.”

It was piteous to behold Mr. Williamson with flushed face and downcast eyes, listening in silence to the torrent of invectives that flowed from the lips of his enraged wife. She at length, exhausted by the indulgence of her angry emotions, left the room, leaning on the arm of her pitying friend, Mrs. Marsden, who kept telling her of “ the misery *she* also had endured on the Plantation, where ill-behaved negresses were as plenty as sugar-canes, and as prone to bestow their sweetness on their masters.”

Bitter were the tears that flowed from the eyes of Clara when she found herself again in the solitude of her chamber. But even the relief of solitude was not long hers, for the pre-

sence of Miss Williamson soon interrupted her painful reflections. The child approached her with diffidence, but affectionate warmth triumphed over the *mauvaise honte* that embarrassed her.

“Dear Miss Mordaunt, how sorry I am!” exclaimed she, passing her arms around the weeping Clara, “that mamma should be so angry with you. If I thought it would have drawn blame on you, I never would have told how that noisy rude Mr. Marsden called papa old boy, or that he said he could not bear to have any one walk or talk with you but himself. Even now I don’t know *why* my telling it made mamma so angry with you, for you could not help papa’s being called an old boy, or *his* not liking any one to walk or talk with you but himself. But you know, dear Miss Mordaunt, you told us that we should always speak the truth; and now you see what mischief comes from it. I have a great mind never to tell the truth again, that I have.”

“Nevertheless, my dear, you must always speak it, whatever may arise, and remember that I, your governess, tell you this.”

“What, if it draw those I love (and indeed, dear Miss Mordaunt, I do love you, though you do correct me so very often) into scrapes?”

“Yes, you must always speak the truth.”

“But what made mamma so very angry? and why was she angry with you, instead of being angry with that disagreeable Mr. Marsden?”

To this question Clara felt it impossible to reply, for she could not unveil the weakness of the mother to the child, so she evaded further conversation, by pleading a severe headache, and consigned her pupil to the hands of the good Betsey, who soon disrobed and placed her in her bed.

“And so, miss, here is a pretty piece of business,” said Betsey, on re-entering the room where Clara, absorbed in melancholy reflections, sat leaning her cheek on her hand. “Why, there has been that impitent jade, Mrs. Popkins, (I asks your pardon, miss, for calling names afore you) a telling, down in the housekeeper’s room, as how missus is jealous of you and old master, and is crying her eyes out up in her dressing-room. The still-room maid told it to me, for she is a good-natured sort of a body, as comes out of my own county. ‘Lord! Betsey,’ says she, ‘I never can go for to

believe that such a nice young lady as Miss Mordaunt can care a button about our old master, when she might have that nice genteel young man, Mr. Seymour, for a sweetheart, who is always a looking arter her, for the under-gardener told me as how he seed him a lurking behind the laurels, ever until miss comed down the walk, and then he joined her in no time, just as Bill Stevens is always a lurking till he sees Mary Bennet, the under housemaid, coming, when he ups and talks to her ——' ”

“ Do not repeat these conversations to me, my good Betsey,” replied Clara. “ I would rather remain in ignorance of them.”

“ O ! for the matter of that, miss, it's no business of mine, and if some people would rather that other people did not take their parts, why it's very easy to hold one's tongues, and let those who are spiteful say what they like.”

“ Indeed, my good Betsey, I value and am grateful for your good will, but it is painful to me to hear the remarks you mention.”

“ Forgive me then, miss, for giving you pain. I ought to know better than to suppose that you, a lady born and bred, would give a pin to hear what still-room maids and sich like people might say or think about you, but as we always likes to know what our fellow-servants say of us, and are obliged to those as takes our parts, I thought as how it would please you to hear what is going on below.”

At an early hour next morning Betsey entered the room, and, having ascertained that the children still slept, handed a letter to Miss Mordaunt.

“ Have I not told you, Betsey, that you were never to bring me a letter from that gentleman ?” said Clara.

“ Why, Lord love you, miss ! I refused this morning to bring a letter from Mr. Marsden, or from Mr. Seymour either. Says I, ‘ Miss Mordaunt has desired me never to bring her no letters from nobody. ’— ‘ Well, but this is *not* a letter from *nobody*, but from *somebody*, ’ says that impitent Mr. Marsden. This staggered me, and I was just going to take his letter, but he looked so saucy with that mocking face of his, that I would not touch it, and then he called me a stupid fool, and cursed me.”

“ You acted perfectly right, my good Betsey,” said Clara.

“ No sooner had he gone away, miss, but out pops Mr. Sey-

mour out of his room. 'Will you be so obliging, Mrs. Betsey, as to take this letter to Miss Mordaunt,' " says he, and he looked so mild and modest-like, that I could hardly bring myself to refuse him.

" 'I am very sorry, sir,' says I, 'that I can't take that there letter; but miss has told me never to take no letters from any gentleman to her, and she'd be very angry if I was to disobey her orders.'

" With that, miss, he looked quite dumb-founded; but instead of calling me a fool, or cursing me, he slipped a sovereign into my hand, and said, 'you are right not to disobey Miss Mordaunt's orders.'

" Ah! Miss, *he* is indeed a real gentleman. No sooner was he gone, but up comes master, wrapped in his flannel dressing-gown, and looking as shy and flustered as possible. He glanced all round to see that nobody was looking, and then said, — 'Take this letter, and give it immediately to Miss Mordaunt. Be sure you deliver it into her hands; and mind you do not mention your having done so to any one.'

" With this he looked cautiously all around (O! I warrant me, he is a sly old chap, that he is,) and popped back again to his dressing-room as quick as could be."

Clara took the letter and hastily opened it, unconscious that the nursery-maid was inquisitively gazing at her while she performed the operation; and it was not until an exclamation from Betsey, occasioned by a bank check falling from the letter on the floor, that she became aware of her own indiscretion.

" Well! who would have thought it? Lord love us! and such an elderly gentleman too, and one I thought so steady like, sending privately letters to a handsome young lady, and with money in 'em! he ought to be ashamed of himself, that's what he ought."

" Betsey, you must entertain no evil thought of your master," said Clara, her cheeks glowing at the reflection that she herself must be, at the moment, exposed to the evil suspicions of Betsey.

" Why, for the matter of that, miss, what *can* a body think? Mrs. Popkins has told every soul in the housekeeper's room, that missus is mad jealous of you, miss, and has been weeping and wailing all night, and says as how she won't allow you to stay in the house: and master has been trying to persuade

missus that he is quite hinnocent, and then comes to give me privately a letter for you, and out of it drops money. Now, this looks very queer, miss, that's what it does, and I can't, for the life of me, help thinking that, after all, master is no better than an old fox, who is trying to tempt some one I know with his money."

There was so much apparent cause for Betsey's injurious surmises, that Clara felt more distressed than surprised by them.

"Pray wait a moment," said she to Betsey, and, taking her pen, she wrote a few hasty lines of thanks to Mr. Williamson for the gift, which she returned; and, having sealed it, confided it to the care of Betsey to deliver to that gentleman.

"You have done right, miss," observed Betsey, "that *you* have, and I'm glad on't; but master ought to be ashamed of himself to throw temptations in the way of those as is n't rich;" and off she tripped with the letter, leaving Miss Mor-daunt embarrassed and annoyed at the impossibility in which she found herself of removing her ill-founded suspicions against Mr. Williamson.

The note from that good-natured man was very satisfactory, as proving that he no longer thought her culpable of the levity and indiscretion of which he suspected her the day before. He mentioned that Mr. Seymour having explained to him the persecution she had endured from Mr. Marsden, and the subsequent annoyance which it had entailed on her, he wholly acquitted her of any participation in the scene of the previous day, and regretted that Mrs. Williamson had determined on parting with her. To prevent any pecuniary inconvenience attending her sudden departure from his family, and as a mark of respect and good will, he inclosed a check for twenty-five pounds, of which he begged her acceptance.

While Clara was painfully occupied with the reflections occasioned by being thus abruptly compelled to return to her good aunt, without even time being given for announcing to her the event, Mrs. Popkins entered her room, and with an undisguised insolence, that added insult to the message of which she was the bearer, informed her that Mrs. Williamson would no longer suffer her to remain in her family.

"She will pay you a month's wages in advance, as she does to all the servants she sends away without a month's notice," said Popkins, drawing herself up with an air of assumed dig-

nity ; “but she desires you will leave the house this day. She also desires that you address no more letters to Mr. Williamson.” So saying, Mrs. Popkins flounced out of the room, slamming the door with a violence that shook the apartment as she retreated.

The sound of angry voices in the corridor were now heard, uttering the following dialogue:—

“I tell you that Mrs. Williamson will not allow you to remain another day in the family, for your wickedness in taking love-letters to her husband,” said Mrs. Popkins.

“And I tell you that you are a meddling, tattling, mischief-maker,” replied the enraged Betsey.

“Can you deny my having seen you, with my own eyes, deliver a letter to Mr. Williamson?” demanded Popkins.

“But how can you prove it was a love-letter?” answered Betsey. “I know it was *not* a love-letter, but quite the contrary, and what’s more, I know that *some* people,” and here she looked spitefully at Popkins, “would be sorry to return a present of money ; ay ! and a large present too, as Miss Mordaunt, who is a *real* lady, did.”

“Why, you fool ! don’t you see that was all a trick to blind you ! When once she is in Lunnun she can receive money and visits too from the old gentleman, without being under any necessity of returning ’em to blind or stop the gossiping tongue of such as you.

“Sich as me, indeed !” retorted Betsey ; “why, for the matter of that, Mrs. Popkins, I’d have you to know that I’m as good as you any day in the week, and as for gossiping, why there aint such a chatter-box as you in all the parish, that there aint.”

“I’d advise you to keep a civiller tongue in your head, Mistress Impudence, or perhaps you may find yourself without a character to get another place,” said Popkins maliciously, as she walked off, muttering to herself, “So there *was* money sent by the old man. Well, it is something to have ascertained that fact. And she, forsooth, returned it !—more fool she ! but *this* point I will keep to myself, when I am telling Mrs. Williamson about our fine lady governess having written to Mr. Williamson. How lucky that I should have chanced to pass his dressing-room door at the precise moment that Betsey was handing him the letter with her low curtsy, and ‘please, sir, Miss Mordaunt bid me give you this.’ I’ll get

Betsey packed off, for she's an impudent minx, as never will hear a word said against the governess. And now that I have discovered that the old gentleman has a taste for beauty, and moreover is generous, why, I'll see if *I* can't please him, and he'll not find me returning his bank-notes, I can tell him. Why, if this foolish Miss Mordaunt had not been so squeamish about keeping the money, I never should have found out anything about the matter. And this very squeamishness has been the means of getting her into a nice scrape, and of losing that minx, Betsey, her place. Lord bless us! what fools some people are."

Such were the cogitations of Mrs. Popkins as she sought the chamber of her mistress, there to relate, with all the high colouring with which her florid imagination could invest it, every thing she knew, with much that she invented.

"Goodness me! if it be not enough to vex a saint to see the impertinence of that Popkins, and how roguery thrives in this world!" exclaimed Betsey, as, with flushed cheeks and throbbing heart, she entered the chamber of Clara. "Would you believe it, miss, as bad luck would have it, no sooner had I gone into master's dressing-room and was handing him your letter, but up pops Popkins, who heard every word I said; for master's back being turned towards the door, she stood there listening. And now she says as how I am to be packed off, for taking love-letters to master. I should not much mind going for the matter of that, but to lose my krackter after two years and a half hard work and good behaviour, is too hard," and tears flowed down the flushed cheeks of Betsey.

Great was the annoyance to Clara at discovering the injury she had so inadvertently drawn on her humble but faithful friend; and bitterly did she deplore the inability in which she found herself either to remunerate her services, or to place her in another situation. Never was the change in her own fortunes so deeply felt, as when reminded of it by the wants of others; those wants to which she would so gladly have administered, but which she now was powerless to relieve. Kind words, and good advice, all she had to offer, were bestowed on Betsey, and were received with a docility and gratitude that proved the goodness of that ignorant but well-intentioned girl. A summons for the young ladies to join their mother in the boudoir was brought by Mrs. Popkins, who assumed no little degree of self-importance on the occasion.

"Here is your wages, and a month's in advance," said that impertinent woman, laying the money on the table; "you had better count it, and give me a receipt; and Mrs. Williamson desires you'll leave the house as soon as possible, and not refer to her for a character. Now, come away, young ladies."

"No, we won't," replied the eldest of Clara's pupils; "we will stay with our own dear good-natured governess, who has been always so kind to us;" and, "*no, we won't*," was echoed by Laura and Arabella.

"But I say you *shall*," exclaimed Mrs. Popkins; "for your mamma will not have you stay here to be cajoled and corrupted by those who are no better than they should be;" and she tossed her head disdainfully and looked at Clara.

The children now ran and embraced Clara, clinging fondly to her, and mingling tears with their embraces. She was so touched by these unequivocal proofs of their affection, that tears bedewed her cheeks; but, having gently freed herself from their arms, she once more exercised her influence over them, by desiring them instantly to obey the commands of their mother; and they quitted the room weeping, while the malicious Popkins turned up her eyes, and remarked aloud on the artfulness of some people, who could wheedle the affections of children, as well as those of their father, at the same time.

To offer to Betsey a portion of the money sent by Mrs. Williamson was the first thing Clara did, when she had subdued the feelings of tenderness and wounded delicacy that struggled for mastery in her breast, when Popkins disappeared with her late pupils; but no entreaties could induce Betsey to accept the proffered gift.

"You may want it yourself, dear Miss Mordaunt," said the good-natured girl, "and I have saved a pretty considerable sum out of my wages, and, moreover, have my father's house to return to when out of place, so that I shall be by no means ill off; but if you will give me some little token of your good will, miss, some little keepsake like, I'll value it more than gold, that I will."

The minor inconveniences of life, from which persons of a certain station are exempt, are often found, when they are forced on such individuals, to be more difficult to be borne than trials which call forth a spirit of endurance suitable to

the emergencies that bring it into action. Clara experienced the truth of this when she commenced packing her wardrobe, and recollected that no inconsiderable portion of it had been consigned to the family laundress the previous day. To send for it was to reveal to the whole of the domestics that her departure had been compulsory, and consequently arose from some grave accusation, and this additional humiliation was very mortifying. The good-natured Betsey undertook to forward the articles to London when they were returned from the laundry, and, having assisted Clara in packing up her clothes and books, procured a person to take them to the lodge, by which a coach was to pass at one o'clock. When Clara was on the point of leaving the house, she was surprised by a visit from Mrs. Marsden, who addressed her in the following words :—

“ So, you are going, miss—what’s your name?—I never can recollect it.”

“ Mordaunt, madam,” said Clara.

“ Well, you are turned away, I find,” resumed Mrs. Marsden ; “ Mrs. Williamson is very angry, as well she may be ; but, as I told her, it was not your fault if her husband chose to take a fancy to you, and a fancy he has taken to you, beyond all doubt ; for, afraid of her as he generally is, he boldly took your part in my presence an hour ago, and declared you had never given him the least reason to suspect your virtue. ‘ Then why did she write to you ? ’ asked, naturally enough, Mrs. Williamson. ‘ Because I had written to her,’ replied he. ‘ What ! you shocking wicked man ! you dare to acknowledge that you have written to her ! ’ ‘ Yes, I prefer incurring your unjust anger,’ said he, ‘ to concealing the truth, or allowing any misinterpretation to be given to the conduct of an innocent young woman.’ Now this I thought very good-natured of him,” said Mrs. Marsden, *par parenthèse*, “ and very different from what my husband, poor dear Mr. Marsden, used to do ; for whenever I found him out in his tricks, and that was, goodness knows, very often, he always declared that he was an innocent man, but that it was those wicked jades, the young negresses on the plantation, that were always falling in love with him. Ah, bless my soul ! how angry I used to be, and how many times I have been to the Obeah woman to procure fetish to punish those artful tempters of my poor husband. But all that is past and gone, and I now

think so little about it, that I am even surprised poor Mrs. Williamson can be so angry at her husband falling in love with you."

"Madam, I must entreat you to dismiss this erroneous impression from your mind," interrupted Clara.

"Of course you deny it," answered Mrs. Marsden, "and as for me, I don't care a pin whether it be true or false."

Clara looked the astonishment she felt.

"Only," resumed Mrs. Marsden, "don't try to deceive me, for it's no kind of use; you won't get me to believe that a sensible man, like Mr. Williamson, who knows the value of money as well as any one, would send you a present of any if he was not in love with you. He swears you returned it immediately, and has even shown his wife a letter in which he says you enclosed it; but she says this is a story got up between you to deceive her, and she won't believe a word of it."

Clara looked distressed and impatient, and was about to indignantly assert her own and Mr. Williamson's innocence, but Mrs. Marsden foiled the attempt by adding—

"Don't interrupt me; it is perfectly immaterial to me whether the story is true or false; what I wish to say is, that as you are dismissed from this situation, and are to be sent away without a character, I renew the offer I before made you through my son, and will take you as my companion, give you a good salary, good living, and not too much to do; and if you continue to please me, take you back with me to Jamaica when I return, where you may marry a rich planter, and become as well to do in the world as some of those who now turn up their noses at you. I liked you from the first; for, whatever people may say, I think you a pretty-behaved young person, and Hercules has taken such a fancy to you, that he has made a point of my engaging you."

"This very circumstance, madam, did no other obstacle exist, would form an insurmountable one to my accepting your offer. To the continued persecution of your son do I owe the false and humiliating position in which I have found myself placed, ever since he commenced it; and I hardly expected, madam, to find *you* willing, nay anxious, to receive under your roof a young person towards whom you were aware your son entertained dishonourable sentiments and intentions."

"How can you blame me for wishing to have under my roof a person whose presence there would induce my son to

remain at home with me? If you were a mother, and of an only son, like my Hercules, you would not be surprised at this. Now, there's a good little pickaninny, don't be obstinate, but agree to come and live with us. Hercules will be in such a passion with me if you persist in refusing; and who knows to what rash act he may be driven! for the poor dear soul has not been used to have his wishes crossed."

A reminder from Betsey, that the coach would pass by the lodge in a few minutes, relieved Clara from any longer listening to the pleadings of the weak and infatuated mother, whom she left loudly expressing her disapprobation of the folly and obstinacy of a penniless girl, who refused a situation that so many pickaninnies would be proud to fill. On reaching the lodge, a letter was delivered to her by the porter, and while questioning him as to who had given it to him, the coach rapidly advanced, and the guard urged her to be expeditious. Her trunk was placed in the boot, and she herself seated in the vehicle, Betsey still clasping the hand of her dear Miss Mordaunt, while tears of regret at the parting coursed each other down her cheek, when Mr. Hercules Marsden was heard, from a distance, shouting to the coachman to wait for him.

"Go on, go on, I entreat you," exclaimed Clara, "and I will pay you double the fare you would receive from the person pursuing me."

"Yes, coachee, go on, go on!" cried Betsey, and away rolled the coach, to the inexpressible relief of our heroine, who saw, from the window, Mr. Williamson and Mr. Seymour galloping across the park towards Mr. Marsden, who used frantic gestures when he saw the coach rapidly advancing. She looked again at the last turn of the road that commanded a view of the park, and beheld Mr. Seymour and Mr. Williamson leading their horses, as they walked side by side with Mr. Marsden back towards the mansion, and gazed on the figure of the former until it disappeared, with an interest never previously experienced towards any of his sex, —an interest that alarmed her with respect to the state of her heart.

An elderly man, in the garb of a quaker, with a girl of fifteen or sixteen years old, who called him father, were the only passengers beside herself in the coach. The man looked earnestly in the face of Clara, and his countenance, though

grave, was expressive of so much mildness, that she met his glance with none of that embarrassment so often experienced by a young female on first encountering the scrutiny of a stranger of the other sex. The girl, too, examined Clara with a more than ordinary attention, but the expression of her placid face was of so pleasing a character, that Clara returned her glances with a smile that encouraged rather than repelled them.

“Thou art young, and comely too, friend,” said the quaker, “to travel thus without protection.”

“I esteem myself fortunate,” replied Clara, “under this circumstance, to have met such fellow-travellers.”

“Hast thou no father, no brother?” asked the quaker, in a tone of kindness.

The question brought tears into the eyes of Clara, who answered, “I am an orphan.”

The hand of the young girl gently pressed hers, and looking in her face with a glance full of pity, she turned to her father and said, “How much less fortunate is this our poor friend, than I am, who have thee, dear father, to protect and cheer me!”—and she pressed her cheek closer to his heart.

The action and the words struck on a chord that vibrated in the heart of Clara. She thought of the time when *she* too was blessed with a fond parent, and she could not repress her tears.

“I meant not to grieve thee, dear friend,” said the young woman, “but when I saw thee thus forlorn, I thought within my breast of my happier lot, and, grateful for it, wished to extend some comfort to thee. Weep not; I pray thee, father, speak unto the maiden, and make her be of good cheer.”

“Thou must not deem me actuated by an idle curiosity, friend,” said the man, if I interrogate thee. “Truth to say, thy appearance has interested me in thy favour, and checked the suspicions to which thy flight, and the pursuit of the young man who followed thee, were calculated to give rise. Why didst thou hurry with such precipitation from the place where thou didst enter the vehicle? and by what right did the young man pursue thee?”

“Answer my father, maiden,” said the girl, “for he hath wisdom, yea verily, and pity too, and may comfort thee. Speak freely unto him, friend, for he doth good to all who seek his counsel.”

“I left the place where I entered the coach,” said Clara, impelled by an irresistible impulse to answer the blunt questions of the quaker, “because I had become an object of unjust suspicion to one of its owners, and the man who pursued me is one who has persecuted and insulted me, without any fault of mine.”

“Would it not have been more prudent to have stayed in the abode thou didst quit, until the injustice of the suspicions entertained against thee was made manifest?” asked the quaker.

“Alas! that was not in my power,” replied Clara, “for I was dismissed.”

“Thou shouldst have stated this fact at first, friend,” said the quaker, gravely; “had I known thou wert dismissed, I should not have questioned thy prudence in leaving the abode. Never conceal any part or circumstance attending thy position, from those to whom thou wouldst reveal thy difficulties. Thy pride—and pride, friend, is a faulty thing—induced thee to omit the fact of thy dismissal; I hope it will not further influence thy conduct.”

Clara blushed, but, after hesitating a moment, conquered her rising inclination to feel offended, and answered, “You are right. I ought to have first stated that my leaving the house alone was not optional; but it is painful and humiliating to admit, and to total strangers too, that one has been driven from any abode.”

The young girl again pressed Clara’s hand kindly, and the father looked less grave.

“And the young man who pursued thee,” resumed he, “did he offer thee unholy love? And hadst thou no friend to protect thee from him? was there no master of the family with whom thou didst sojourn who could, and whose duty it was, to shield thee from such insult?”

“The young man,” replied Clara, “is a stranger—a West Indian, unacquainted with our modes and customs, ignorant of the respect due to woman, and unaccustomed to control his passions, or to refrain from seeking their indulgence.”

“But the master of the abode should have afforded thee protection.”

“The unjust suspicions of his wife precluded his doing so, except at the risk of increasing them, and exciting still more strongly her anger against me.”

“Am I to understand, friend, that she was jealous of thee and her husband?”

“Even so,” answered Clara, and blushes dyed her cheek as she made the mortifying avowal.

“Alack, alack!” exclaimed the quaker, “how hard is the lot of the young and comely maiden sent forth to earn a scanty pittance from strangers, exposed to temptations and suspicions, and expected to be, what mortal never yet was, exempt from faults.”

This soliloquy, uttered aloud, led the fair young quakeress to take the hand of Clara within hers, and to press it affectionately.

“I would,” said she, “that I had a sister like unto thee, for verily thou art mild and quiet as our own people, and resemblest not the flaunting young maidens I often behold, who are like the gaudy tulips of the garden.”

“I have told thee, Rachael, that thou must not censure others,” said the father; and the young girl bent her eyes down at his rebuke.

“And to whom goest thou now, friend?” asked he.

“To an aunt, who has been as a mother to me.”

“Why didst thou leave her?”

“Because I could not bear to encroach on her slender means of subsistence.”

“Thou art a good maiden, yea verily, worthy of commendation;” and again Rachael, thus encouraged by her father’s approval of Clara, pressed her hand affectionately.

“My name is Abraham Jacob, and shouldst thou need friendly counsel, or that thy finances ebb low, thou wilt find me willing to assist thee, young maiden. My house of business is in Austin Friars, No. 14, but my dwelling is on Clapham Common. Having told thee thus much, I wish to know how thou art called?”

“My name is Clara Mordaunt.”

“Mordaunt,” repeated Abraham Jacob; “I once knew a merchant of that name. Art thou of his family?”

“Alas! he was my father.”

“Poor child! poor child!” said Abraham Jacob, and he pressed Clara’s hand with nearly as much gentleness and affection as his Rachael had done a few minutes before. The sympathy and pity of this staid and sober man affected Clara even more than did the kindness of his daughter; for pity

seemed as natural to her gentle disposition as perfume is to the modest lily, which yields a portion of its sweetness to all that come within its atmosphere. But to see a man of the grave demeanour and undemonstrative manners of Abraham Jacob thus evince his sympathy for the orphan, subdued her into tears.

“I knew thy father well, poor maiden!” said the quaker, “and many were his good qualities; his sole failing was ostentation, which led him into an expenditure inconsistent with the prudent and frugal habits which a merchant should never abandon, and which caused the ruin of his fortune. Poor man! peace be to his spirit! and thou, poor child—but come, be of good cheer, Clara, thou hast found a friend in the old acquaintance of thy father, and Rachael, too, will be thy friend when old Abraham Jacob sleeps with his forefathers.”

Tears filled the eyes of the fond and duteous daughter when her father referred to his death.

“Speak not of an event, dear father, the bare idea of which is never to be contemplated without a grief that not even thy chiding can repress. Well may this life be called a vale of tears, when its conditions are fraught with such sources of pain. Thou hast told me, father, that the course of nature is, that children should survive their parents; and is not this alone sufficient cause for sorrow. How can a child look on the face of a dear parent, without remembering that he is to be taken from her? That the eye that beams affection will be closed, the tongue that utters words of love alone will be silent, and the dear breast on which she has leaned her head (and Rachael pressed hers on her father’s bosom) will be laid in the narrow house.”

“Forbear, my child, to indulge in painful anticipations; behold, thou hast saddened our young friend, when thou shouldst have comforted her. ’Tis not well of thee, Rachael, to give way to morbid regrets: thou shouldst not forget that sufficient to the day is the evil thereof. Besides, thou shouldst remember, an all-wise Creator has ordained, that as parents watch over the helpless infancy of their children, so the children are to nurse the declining days of their parents, support the tottering steps, and administer to the weakness of second childhood in those who administered to their wants.”

The wheels of the coach rattling over the pavement, and the

increased noise that smote their ears, announced to the passengers in the vehicle, that they were now in London, and must soon part. On reaching the place where the coach stopped, Abraham Jacob descended, and procured a coach for Clara, into which he handed her, and helped to place her luggage, with as much cordiality and kindness as if they had been old friends, instead of recent acquaintances, but not before his daughter Rachael had affectionately embraced her, and renewed her invitation to visit them at Clapham Common.

“Fare thee well, friend Clara!” said the quaker; “forget not that thou hast a friend at No. 14, Austin Friars, to whom thou mayst always apply when thou needest his services. Fare thee well, friend Clara, thy coach fare is paid,” said he, as the vehicle rolled away with Clara, who felt even this last act of kindness and attention with a sense of gratitude not often excited in her heart during the last few months. “How shortsighted, and doubtful of the goodness of Providence are we prone to be,” thought she. “A few hours ago I entered the coach which bore me to London with fear and misgiving, at finding myself, for the first time of my life, alone with utter strangers; yet among those strangers I have found such kindness as makes me consider them in the light of friends, and I feel a confidence in their good wishes, that has acted as a cordial on my drooping spirits.”

On this, as on every occasion of her existence, where thanks were to be offered for benefits received, or support sought for trials to be endured, Clara addressed herself in spirit to the Most High, and never were more heart-felt aspirations offered up to the Deity, than those mentally poured out by her, as, unconscious of the tumult and jarring sounds amidst which she was passing, the coach rolled on towards Piccadilly.

On arriving near the residence of her aunt, she bethought herself of the prudence of not entering the presence of that dear relative unannounced, lest, in her delicate health, the surprise might be injurious to her. She therefore desired the coachman to stop a door or two from that of Mrs. Waller's humble abode, and, having descended, she approached, and rang the gate bell. Before this summons was answered, her eyes fell on the little slip of garden that separated the house from the road, and she became alarmed as well as surprised at observing the total change that it presented. No more redolent

with sweet flowers, it looked as if long neglected; the parlour window too was half closed, and its glass casement, wont to be so bright, was covered with the accumulated dust of weeks. A strange face, belonging to a most slatternly person, now approached the gate, and, in answer to Clara's agitated inquiries relative to Mrs. Waller, confirmed her fears, by stating that missis, as she called her, was very poorly, and had kept her bed for the last ten days.

"Let me in," cried Clara, "that I may directly go to my aunt."

"Oh! you are then the niece that she is constantly talking about?" said the woman, as she unlocked the gate and followed Clara into the house, her countenance expressing any thing but satisfaction. How changed was now this lately comfortable though humble abode! The dimity curtains, no longer white, were smeared with spots of grease, and the impression of large and dirty fingers were visible on many parts of them—the carpet was stained in sundry places, and every article of the furniture bore incontestible marks, not only of total neglect, but of having been used by persons of uncleanly habits. The room and little hall were impregnated with the fumes of tobacco, mingled with the odour of gin; and the breath and clothes of the slattern who stood close to Clara bore evidence of her partiality to both. She eyed our heroine with no friendly glance, as the countenance of the latter evinced the surprise and disgust she felt at the altered aspect of the dwelling, and began something like an explanation, in which the fatigue and hardships encountered in nursing and sitting up at night with missis were detailed.

"Get my trunk brought in from the coach which stands at a little distance from the door," said Clara.

"But who's to answer the door while I go?" asked the woman. "There is not a soul in the house, except the poor *sick* lady and I, and I'm answerable for every thing."

As if to refute this assertion, the loud but not unmusical voice of a man was now heard approaching, singing the following words, in an accent that left no doubt of his country.

"Indeed I am a roving boy,
And whiskey it is all my joy;
And if I get enough of that,
Why what the devil cares poor Pat?"

Anger and shame strove for mastery in the face of the wo-

man, as she turned to the man, who was evidently labouring under the effect of a recent potation; for his face was flushed, and his eyes lighted up with fun and frolic.

“ ’Tis my husband, miss, as is working in the neighbourhood, and has just stepped in to see me for a minute or so,” said she, casting an angry glance at the man.

“ Arrah! is it me yer husband, ye ould baste of the world? Do n’t believe her, miss! aren’t ye ashamed of yerself to be telling such lies to a nice handsome young lady? Faith and troth! I’m no more her husband, miss, than I’m yours, though she’s been thrying to come over me to marry her, and giving me the dhrink, and all sorts of coaxing, for that same.”

The woman, finding concealment now impossible, proceeded in search of the trunk, and Clara ascended to the chamber of her aunt, leaving the intoxicated Hibernian loudly and joyously singing the same stanza, which had announced his presence to her. She opened the door gently, and the languid voice of her aunt met her ear.

“ I have rung repeatedly, Fanny,” said she; “ how can you be so neglectful? It is strange that no answer has come from my niece: I did expect that she would have been here before this.”

“ Dear aunt, *I am* here,” exclaimed Clara, and in a moment she was pressed in the arms of Mrs. Waller. The joyful surprise seemed to reanimate the languid frame of the poor invalid, and her niece now discovered that two letters had been written to summon her from the country. That they never reached her was not to be wondered at, when our readers are informed that Fanny had committed both to the flames. A day or two subsequently to Clara’s entering the family of Mr. Williamson, the servant of her aunt had married and retired to the country, and the person engaged to fill her place was no other than the untidy person already presented to our readers. Mrs. Waller unhappily fell ill soon after this unworthy servant came to her, but concealed the circumstance from her niece, lest the latter should, from the knowledge of it, throw up her engagement, and it was not until she became sensible of her increasing danger, that she wrote to apprise her of the fact. The wicked Fanny, finding her mistress too ill to overlook her proceedings, and too solitary to have any friend to perform this service for her, took

advantage of her position, and domesticated in the house an Irish labourer, on whose heart and hand she had serious designs. To win the first and secure the second she supplied him most liberally with gin and tobacco; and the once neat and comfortable parlour of Mrs. Waller became the scene of the daily and nightly orgies of Denis O'Leary and his admirer. Calculating from the increasing indisposition of her mistress that her recovery was doubtful, if not impossible, Fanny determined on neither calling in a physician to her aid, though commanded to do so by the sick lady, nor forwarding the letters written to summon Clara. Death must, she thought, soon ensue, and, truth to say, she took no pains, either by care or attention, to avert or retard his approach, having made up her mind to appropriate to herself all the property of her mistress as soon as that event had occurred. That her aunt had experienced the grossest neglect was but too visible, and the heart of Clara felt a bitter pang as she witnessed the desolate state in which her dear relative had been left, and reflected on the sad necessity which compelled her to confide this excellent woman to the mercies of an unprincipled and unfeeling hireling. While indulging in these reflections, the hand of her aunt pressed fondly in hers, the loud voice of Denis O'Leary burst on her ear, and caused the invalid to start from her pillow, as he roared, rather than sung, the following stanza:—

“ Oh! love and whiskey hand in hand
Together rule the Irish land;
While in ould England, troth a grawh, (1)
The stupid louts are ruled by law.”

“ How are we to get this dreadful man out of the house, my dear child?” asked the alarmed Mrs. Waller; “ I fear that sad doings have taken place during my illness, and, to confess the truth, I have sometimes entertained serious apprehensions, when I have heard the noisy mirth of the man whose voice we have now listened to, and which has often broken on my ear in the dead of night. I have questioned my worthless servant, but she has impudently denied that there was any human being in the house beside herself, and insisted that the voice was that of some person in the street.”

“ I will go and dismiss him,” replied Clara, though she

(1) Dear.

shrank from the very notion of another interview with the intoxicated Hibernian. She found him in the little parlour, a short pipe in the corner of his mouth, which sent forth such unsavoury fumes of tobacco, as nearly obstructed her view of him, as well as were most offensive to her olfactory nerves.

"I tell you, O'Leary, you must not sit smoking here, now the young lady is comed," said the shrewish voice of Fanny.

"And what for not?" demanded Denis.

"Why, because the young lady will sit here herself."

"Why thin, that's the very raison I ought to stay, just for to keep her company, poor young creathur. Wouldent it be a sin and a shame, too, to let her sit here all alone by herself, when I could divart her by singing a stave of some merry Irish song, or by telling her fine stories about the ould counthry, that it would do her heart good to hear?"

"Well, if you're not the most provokingist hanimal as ever lived, my name is n't Fanny Belcher."

"Don't go for to call me names, Mrs. Belcher, whatever you do, for I'm no more a hanimal than yourself."

"Vhy, you vicked Hirishman, vill you hear reason?"

The entrance of Clara prevented the conclusion of the speech, and made Denis O'Leary rise from his chair, while Fanny looked nearly as discomfited as she felt.

"I hope you are quite well, miss," said Denis. "Troth! and I'm proud to see you, for a purtier young lady, a more compleater *colleen dhas*,⁽¹⁾ as we say in ould Ireland, I never clapped my eyes upon."

"My aunt wishes you to leave the house," said Clara, timidly.

"Is it myself, agrawh? faith and no sooner said than done, for it never shall be thrown in the face of Denis O'Leary that he stayed in any house a minute longer than he was welcome." Saying which he shook the ashes from his pipe, which he consigned to his pocket, and, taking up his hat, turned to Clara with a smile of good-nature, and added. "Good morning to ye, miss, and good luck to ye into the bargain, for though youv'e given me what in Ireland we call the could shoulder, which is a hint to be off, faith and troth, I can't find it in my heart to quarrel with your purty face, for, be my soul, I never could say a cross word to a *colleen dhas*." And off he trudged, singing

(1) Handsome girl.

“ When you’re parting never cry,
 For sorrow makes a body dry;
 And in England there’s no whiskey
 To keep up the spirits frisky.”

“ Good bye, Fanny, don’t be whimpering afther me a grawh ;
 what ’s the use of it, ye crethur ?

“ O! Denis, is this the way you leaves me ? you ’re the most
 ungratefulest hanimal as ever walked in shoe leather.”

“ Dacency, Fanny, honey ! don’t be afther exposing your-
 sef. I ’m not by no means ungrateful, ’pon my soul quite the
 contrary. You tould me as how the ould sick lady up stairs
 desired you to get a steady man, and, above all, an Irishman,
 to stay in the house till the breath was out of her body. I
 came accordingly, and have never left the house, day or night,
 since I entered the sarvice. What have I done except smoke
 my dhudeen, dhrink a dhrop of potheen whenever you would
 let me have it, and sing a song just to keep up my sperits ?
 Where ’s the ingratitude then, Fanny, when the ould sick lady
 sends me word that she wishes me to leave her house, and
 that I go ? Would you have me be such a mean baste as
 to stay afther my welcome is worn out ? Troth ! if you
 would, you ’re not the girl I took you for, and so good bye to
 you, *ma vourneen*,” said Denis, as he walked out of the house,
 resuming his favourite ditty in praise of whiskey, which he
 continued to sing as he passed through the little garden and into
 the road.

“ I ’ll not stay another hour in the house,” said Fanny,
 weeping bitterly while she spoke, and, casting an angry glance
 at Miss Mordaunt, she left the room. She, returned, however
 in less than a minute, and demanded her wages, declaring she
 would be paid.

Intimidated by her violence, Clara searched for her purse
 to pay her, but was overwhelmed with dismay on discovering
 that she had lost it. She remembered perfectly having put
 the letter given to her at the lodge, when leaving Mr. Wil-
 liamson’s, into her *sac*, and recollected feeling her purse when
 she did so. But neither purse nor letter were now to be
 found. Her look of consternation was not unnoticed by the
 wicked and artful Fanny, who became more insolent as she
 guessed the dilemma in which Miss Mordaunt was placed.

“ My wages I ’ll have, that I will,” repeated she, “ and I ’ll
 take no false hexcuses, that I won’t.”

The bell of Mrs. Waller ringing at this moment, drew her niece to her room.

“Where can I find your money, dear aunt?” said Clara, “for Fanny won’t remain, and insists on being paid.”

Mrs. Waller pointed to the *escrutoire*, the key of which was in the drawer of the table by her bed-side, and Clara unlocked it, but not a single piece of money did it contain, and the recollection that her sick aunt and herself were penniless nearly overpowered her. She approached the bed, and, finding that Mrs. Waller had fainted, rushed in search of any restorative that could be useful, but nothing of the kind could she discover.

“My aunt has fainted!—for Heaven’s sake tell me where I can get Hungary water, eau de Cologne, or any thing,” demanded Clara.

“There’s nothing of the kind in the house,” replied Fanny.

“Go, in mercy go, for the next doctor or apothecary,” urged Clara, as she remembered that her small and humble dressing-box contained at least both eau de Cologne and Hungary water, and flew to procure them.

She bathed the pale brow and temples of her aunt, rubbed her attenuated and marble-like hands, but, alas! animation had fled for ever, and a few minutes disclosed to Clara the fearful truth that life was extinct. She threw herself, in an agony of grief, by the side of the corse, pressed her lips to the cold ones of the dead, and lost in a deep swoon the sense of her misfortune.

When restored to consciousness, she found herself in a room into which but a slight portion of light was admitted, but that portion was sufficient to enable her to see that her bed and all its draperies were scrupulously clean. She pressed her hand to her brow, and endeavoured to recall the memory of late events, but all appeared like the incidents in a feverish dream, until the recollection of her aunt’s death struck on her mind, and awakened a burst of passionate grief.

“Thou must not weep, dear friend, indeed thou must not,” was uttered in the gentle voice of Rachael Jacob. “Remember, dear Clara, that if thou hast lost one friend, thou hast still *two* left; for Abraham Jacob and his daughter will never forsake thee. Yea, verily, my father will be as a father unto thee; and I, Clara, will be to thee as a sister.”

The feverish hand of Clara was tenderly pressed by the

cool and fresh hands of the good Rachael, who insisted that the invalid should not ask questions, or indulge in grief for the present. It was much easier to obey the first prohibition than the second ; for, reduced by a long illness to a state of extreme debility, she was almost incapable of speaking. But the bitter recollection of the death of her beloved aunt, that estimable and tender friend who had stood in the light of a mother to her from her infancy, awakened such sorrow in her heart, that even religion, that blessed and sole source of consolation in affliction, failed to soothe it, during the first days of her returned consciousness. The circumstances, too, attending the death of her aunt, the neglect that preceded, and the awful suddenness with which it had occurred, added a poignant bitterness to her grief, as a thousand painful but useless retrospections of whether this calamity might not have been retarded, if not averted, by her presence and tender care, presented themselves to her mind. Grief is, of all the passions, the one that is the most ingenious and indefatigable in finding food for its own subsistence. Even vanity and hope, for ever seeking nurture to sustain them, are less successful in the chase than is grief. Poor Clara felt this, when, hour by hour, the recollection of innumerable acts of affection on the part of her aunt,—always duly appreciated but never felt so strongly as now,—arose, as if to reproach away every effort at consolation. Then came the notion that *she* ought never to have left this dear and infirm woman to the care of hirelings ; that it was her positive duty to have remained with her ; and that, had she so done, she had not lost her. Tears, bitter but unavailing, would course each other down her pale cheek, in despite of the affectionate counsel of Rachael, and even under the full sense of duty towards God, so deeply impressed on her soul. She would dwell for hours on the self-denial of the excellent Mrs. Waller, in not sooner apprising her of the illness which so fatally terminated, and would shudder at the idea of the shameful neglect to which she had been subjected, a neglect that had but too probably accelerated the melancholy catastrophe she had arrived but to witness.

Youth, and a naturally strong constitution, those inestimable blessings, seldom prized until they have fled, enabled Clara to recover from the alarming state of debility, induced by the violence of the fever which assailed her on the death

of her aunt, and with returning strength of frame came a more healthy state of mind. She remembered that, in her poverty and dependence, it was only by the exercise of her talents that she could obtain a livelihood, and that to indulge in useless grief, while eating the bread of idleness, was highly reprehensible.

These salutary reflections induced her, though still languid, to leave her room, and meet the good Abraham Jacob in the family apartment. He received her with a friendly warmth of manner, which, though marked by the plainness and simplicity characterising the sect to which he belonged, did more towards making her feel instantaneously at her ease, than the most bland and studied politeness could have accomplished. He briefly related to her, that in removing his daughter from the stage coach in which Clara had been a passenger, he found her purse and an unopened letter bearing her address.

“ I could not take it to thee until I had conveyed Rachael to our home, but I had no sooner lodged her in this our quiet abode, than I proceeded as rapidly as I could to Kensington, and happily, my young friend, in time to rescue thee from wicked hands, and thy little property, and that of thy deceased relative, from the grasp of the unrighteous. Markest thou not, maiden, the intervention of an ever-watchful and beneficent Providence in thy behalf in this affair? When thou hadst discovered the loss of thy purse, thou didst most probably consider it a heavy aggravation to thy troubles; for it is thus that we poor short-sighted mortals are ever prone to judge the trials by which we are visited. Now, the loss of that purse it was which led me to thy roof, where I found thee nearly as cold and insensible as the departed one on whose bed thou hadst fallen, while the heartless and dishonest handmaiden of the deceased was busily engaged rifling the drawers and trunks of all the moveables they contained, wholly regardless of the dead, and the apparently dying. I soon administered help to thee, summoned two of the police unto my aid, to one of whom I gave the wicked handmaiden in charge; and, remembering a worthy couple of friends, who reside near unto the dwelling of thy late aunt, I dispatched the second policeman with a request that they would come unto mine aid, and bring with them some of the creature comforts most befitting the weak state of a much suffering young damsel. They

came: the dead was respected, and the sick cared for. In their leathern vehicle, attended by the wife of my friend, thou wert borne hither, and confided to the affectionate charge of Rachael, and of Tabitha, my worthy housekeeper. I saw the last duties fulfilled to the departed, previously to which, two sober and respectable women, well known to my good friend Martha Pennifold, were placed in the house to watch by the dead, and all was done to testify the respect of the living towards thy late friend that we could devise."

The tears of Clara flowed abundantly during the narration of this plain and unvarnished statement, and the only effort at consolation offered, was, that Abraham kindly pressed one of her hands in his, and assured her that during his life she should never want a friend, while the gentle Rachael tenderly folded her arm around her, and whispered that "she would be unto friend Clara a sister."

"Thou art not destitute of a pittance, maiden," resumed Jacob, "which, small though it be, will preclude thee from the sense of absolute dependence, so painful to generous minds. I have caused the furniture of thy departed aunt to be sold, and have vested the produce in the three per Cent. funds, in thy name. Thou shalt see the account when thy health is re-established."

"O! I do not require to see any account," exclaimed the still weeping Clara; "I am sure that all which you, my kind, my excellent friend, have done, is right."

"Nay, maiden, but this is not wise or business-like. Even between the dearest friends a strict examination of all pecuniary transactions should take place; for it satisfies both parties, and thou must acquire habits of business and circumspection. It was the want of these essentials, nay, these indispensables in business, I should say, that led to the ruin of thy poor father. He trusted to others, which served not them (for injudicious confidence seldom does), and lost himself. I require even my daughter Rachael to render me an account, every week, of all disbursements made through her; so that thou, who art even as another daughter unto me, seeing that thou hast no other *earthly father*, must become punctual and regular in all pecuniary transactions."

During the whole of this exordium on business, Clara, if the truth must be owned, was wondering what had become of the

letter stated to have been found with her purse in the coach. One glance at the superscription, when placed in her hand at the lodge, convinced her that it was not the writing of Mr. Williamson or of Mr. Hercules Marsden—whose then could it be? “Mr. Seymour’s,” undoubtedly whispered her heart, even when she first grasped it; and it was a consciousness that the letter might contain something to excite a more than ordinary interest in her breast, that induced her to reserve its perusal for the solitude of her own little room at her aunt’s, in preference to opening and reading it in the coach, before strangers who might witness any emotion it occasioned. The grief that awaited her at Kensington, and the long and severe illness consequent on that melancholy event, effaced the recollection of the letter from her mind, but now, recalled by Abraham Jacob’s reference to it, she longed, but dared not, from an unaccountable timidity and embarrassment, ask the good man to give it to her. While she thought over the best mode of introducing the subject, Abraham Jacob spared her the trouble, by saying “There is one circumstance, friend Clara, that I have not stated to thee, and which has chafed me more than is meet aught should. The letter (and here Clara felt the blood rush to her cheeks) I mentioned to thee, as having found with thy purse, I have mislaid, and can nowhere find.” Tried as Clara had lately been in the school of adversity and affliction, she thought not that she could feel the pang of disappointment which now shot through her heart on learning that the letter was lost. What might it not have contained of sympathy—of friendship—perhaps of a still softer feeling?—and her pulse throbbed quicker as the possibility of its containing such a sentiment passed through her mind.

Her varying colour passed not unnoticed by Abraham. “I fear, friend Clara,” said he, “that the letter I have lost was of more than ordinary importance to thy happiness. If so, and thou canst instruct me who was the writer, I will, as far as in me lies, make atonement for my heedlessness, by going or writing unto the person, and stating the misadventure.”

“It is of little importance, my kind friend,” replied Clara, endeavouring to assume an air of indifference.

“Why then, maiden, did thy poor pale cheek become bright as the rose when I mentioned the letter?”

“ I am weak, and easily excited into emotion,” replied Clara, her eyes becoming veiled by their long lids, as they drooped beneath the searching glance of Abraham Jacob.

“ Knowest thou the writer?” demanded he.

“ I am not sure—that is, I thought it might be—that is—I never saw the writing before.”

“ Then the letter cannot have been of importance to thee, friend Clara,” said Abraham Jacob, looking at her with more archness than she had ever previously seen his countenance betray.

“ No, certainly not of importance,” replied Clara; but the expression of disappointment which her face unconsciously assumed contradicted the assertion of her lips, and Abraham having remarked this, shook his head, and walked towards the window.

The repose and quiet of the residence in which she now found herself had a most salutary effect on the health and spirits of Clara. The primitive simplicity of the habits of life of the owners, in which an unobtrusive but soothing cordiality was evinced made her feel more at ease than she had ever been since she left her aunt's, to enter the family of Mr. Williamson; and the regularity of the routine of occupations, hours for repasts, exercise, and devotion, though it might by many a modern fine lady be considered dull and monotonous, was very agreeable to her, after having been accustomed to the irregularity and discomfort of her late abode, where an ill-directed expenditure, calculated to provide for ostentatious display, left little for the comfort of the inhabitants of the nursery and school-room. The plain but solid and well-finished furniture, the grave tinted hangings and carpets, the absence of all gilded or meretricious decorations, and the scrupulous cleanliness of the house, and all that it contained, offered an agreeable contrast to the mixture of gaudy extravagance exhibited in the rooms destined for reception in the mansion of Mr. Williamson, and the squalid poverty of those occupied by his children and their governess.

Fair Lawn, for so was Abraham Jacob's residence called, looked as if arranged to be the temple of domestic peace, where the tenants were never frightened from the cheerful hearth by the rude noise of boisterous mirth or the brilliant blaze of unnumbered lights. Yet nothing of gloom, and nothing likely to engender it, could here be seen; and though the

silvery sound of music awoke no echoes in this still and sober abode, and its walls glowed not with the gorgeous tints of inspired genius, the low and sweet voice of the gentle Rachael, and her meek but lovely face, prevented their absence from being felt as a privation. And when the windows were thrown open to the garden, blooming with the richest and rarest flowers, and the carols of a thousand birds broke on the stillness of the house, Clara fancied that she had never before been in so delightful an abode. Each day endeared the fair and gentle Rachael to her still more fondly, and gave her a greater confidence in the friendship of the good Abraham. The female servants, or the handmaidens, as Abraham styled them, partook of the grave but kind nature of their employers. No shrill voices calling "Betty housemaid," or "Mary still-room maid," could here be heard from the back stairs; no sounds of stifled laughter, no snatch of a street ballad, stole on the startled ear; no tawdry finery of soiled pink ribbons, or gaudy-coloured gowns, were encountered, but maidens with sad-tinted dresses, snow-white aprons, and the simple quaker cap, the most becoming in the world, passed sedately along, brushing away every trace of dust, and precluding the appearance of a single one of those webs which the hapless and transformed Arachne is doomed to weave, and whose labours are so seldom invaded by the silken-robed damsels y'clept housemaids in fashionable families. But though delighted with her sojourn at Fair Lawn, Clara felt that, now her health was re-established, she must no longer eat the bread of idleness. She consulted her good friend Abraham Jacob on the best means of finding a situation.

"Why art thou so desirous to leave us?" asked he; "we like thee exceedingly much, maiden, yea verily, thou art become dear unto us."

Grateful for this kindness, Clara expressed her repugnance to a state of dependence, however light the sense of that dependence might be rendered by the delicacy and goodness of those with whom she dwelt.

Though unfeignedly sorry at the notion of her leaving them, he could not disapprove of the motive that urged her to adopt the resolution, and having extorted from her a promise, that in all difficulties and emergencies she would have recourse to him for advice and assistance, and consider Fair Lawn as a home to which she should be ever sincerely wel-

comed, he undertook to inquire among some acquaintances in London, if they knew of any situation likely to suit Clara. A tear dimmed the eye of the gentle Rachael when she heard of Clara's determination.

"Why, dear friend, wilt thou not abide with us?" asked she. "Thy presence is 'pleasant to me, yea, verily, as is the fair flower that was pale and fading, but which my care hath reared into bloom. So wert thou, dear Clara, drooping and dying when thou camest hither, and I have nursed and cared for thee even as for my favourite flower; and thou, like it, hast bloomed and prospered. It repays my care, for its beauty and fragrance pleaseth me much, but thou, who art dearer to me than all the flowers in the world, and whom each time I look on, the pleasant thought that I have nursed thee into healthful bloom cheers me with the memory of a good action, thou wilt leave me, and I will look on the chair where thou hast sat, and on the flowers thou didst love, and *thou* wilt be far away, and thy sweet voice will no more cheer me, thy soft white hand no more return the pressure of mine." And the fair Rachael bent her head on the shoulder of Clara, and wept.

Clara, who participated in her emotion, at length succeeded in convincing Rachael of the prudence and propriety of the resolution she had formed; and the amiable girl, wiping off her tears, said, "We Friends are not accustomed to weep; not that we feel less keenly than others, but from childhood we are taught to subdue the demonstrations of sorrow. We are taught that we are sent into this world, as into a state of trial to be borne without murmuring; in order to fit us for a better. Thou hast seen the emotion I could not controul, dear friend, although I knew it to be blameable, and thou must receive it not so much as a proof of my weakness, as of thy worth and my affection."

Hitherto, ever since Clara's health permitted her to join the family circle, the return of Abraham Jacob from the city had been looked for with as much impatience by his fond daughter, as a person of her subdued manners could evince; but now that Rachael expected that his return might announce an engagement for her guest, she almost dreaded it, and the struggle to conceal the emotion she could not suppress touched Clara profoundly. Ten days had elapsed since the decision of Clara to leave her kind friends, as soon as a situation could be

found, had been announced, when Abraham Jacob told her that he had that day been informed by a friend, to whom he had spoken about her, that a Mrs. Vincent Robinson, a widowed lady, wanted a companion for herself, who would also be the governess of a young grand-niece whom she had adopted.

“I am so well known to the person who has named thee to friend Vincent Robinson, that no other reference will be required. I have answered for thee, even as if thou wert known to me from thine infancy; yea, verily, as if thou wert my child. I have promised that thou wilt call on friend Robinson to-morrow, and I will conduct thee to her dwelling.”

The evening that followed this announcement was the least cheerful of any that had passed at Fair Lawn, since Clara's recovery. Each of the three individuals who composed the circle could think of nothing save the impending separation, but avoided disclosing their thoughts.

The parting next morning, between Clara and Rachael, was very trying to the feelings of both; nor would the affectionate young girl release her from her embrace, until she had again promised to consider Fair Lawn as her home, whenever circumstances or inclination led her to return to it.

Abraham Jacob accompanied her in his carriage to Hanover Square, in which was the mansion of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and his inquiries for that lady having been met by the statement that she had not yet quitted her dressing-room, but had left word that she would receive the young lady there, Clara was conducted to her apartment, and her friend was shown into a sitting-room to wait her return.

Mrs. Vincent Robinson *had* been a beauty, a fact few persons beside herself were disposed or even able to remember; nay, so much was it questioned, that it was considered apocryphal. But in proportion to the incredulity of others on this point, was the conviction of the lady herself; nay more, she was fully disposed to change the *had been* of the past tense into the *is* of the actual present, and plainly intimated, not only by the juvenility of her toilet, but by her conversation and *manière d'être*, that she still deemed herself a very captivating woman. Persons were not wanting who assisted to keep alive this erroneous impression in her mind: these were chiefly to be found among the needy *habitués* of her mansion, who *really* admired the *agrémens* of her well-furnished house, and excellent dinners, even more than they professed

to admire the mistress of the mansion. Dowerless widows, portionless maiden ladies, separated wives with small allowances, superannuated colonels and half-pay captains, with a whole herd of male and female writers, whose literary *célébrités* were as limited as their fame, or pecuniary resources, formed the coterie of Mrs. Vincent Robinson.

So little was the real character of this lady known to the city friend from whom Abraham Jacob applied for intelligence respecting her, that he implicitly believed what he stated, and which he had heard from another, that she was, what in truth was a fact, a rich old woman, who had generously adopted the child of a poor relation, and was said to be very hospitable and good-natured ; but no mention was made of her defects.

Clara alone, as we before stated, was admitted to the sanctuary of the antiquated beauty ; nor did she regret this circumstance, for a rapid glance at the chamber and its owner convinced her that the shrewd-minded quaker would have been little disposed to approve either ; and, as she wished to obtain a situation, she was not inclined to be as fastidious as he would have been.

Mrs. Vincent Robinson was a small thin woman, with features sharply defined, and eyes that still rolled for the admiration to which, some forty years before, they might have been accustomed. The skin was drawn tightly over her face, leaving on it deep lines, traced by that disrespector of persons, Time—some three or four of which crossed her narrow and retreating forehead, while others extended from her nostrils to the corners of her mouth, and not a few encircled her eyes. An expression of imbecility, amounting to childishness, pervaded her face, and contrasted so ludicrously with the marks of age impressed on it, that it was difficult to contemplate her without an inclination to smile. Her slight figure was enveloped in a robe of delicate muslin, lined with pale pink silk, confined round the waist by a *ceinture* of the same colour. A large bouquet of rare flowers graced her bust, the brown and withered portion of which, visible through the opening of her dress, reminded one of an Egyptian mummy decked with flowers. A fantastic cap, with pink ribbons passed through the ringlets of her wig, completed her costume, and her robe being unusually short permitted the display of a pair of feet resembling the tongues of reindeer, attached to legs like walking-sticks, in tight silk cases.

The room was hung with rose-coloured silk, over which fell draperies of worked muslin, tastefully arranged, and edged with lace. Mirrors were plentifully distributed around the apartment, a profusion of flowers in rich China vases were arranged on consoles, and on dwarf book-cases, in which were placed books handsomely bound. The light was admitted through the medium of gold-tinted glass, which gave a Claude Lorraine hue to the chamber, rendering it, and all contained therein, save its owner, so picturesque, that the eye was shocked by the contrast afforded by the shrine, and the ancient idol worshipped there. It looked as if prepared for some young and lovely being, who had been expelled by the wicked arts of the old fairy who now occupied it.

The simpering smile that seldom left the withered lips of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, instead of being expressive of good humour, conveyed the notion of being affected by some spell of witchcraft, and a tremulous movement of her head and hands rendered it still more unearthly. She was seated in a *bergère*, at a writing-table, the appointments of which were very costly; and on a blotting-book, bound in velvet, with gold mouldings, was a sheet of embossed letter-paper, on which she was writing when Clara was announced. The little girl she had adopted was seated on a low ottoman, tying up a garland of artificial flowers, and was attired in a dress much resembling that in which the Shepherdess of the Alps is generally represented. The poor child seemed little at her ease, and, though singularly pretty, looked as faded as a China rose after having been for a week in the heated atmosphere of a boudoir.

"Miss Mordaunt," said the groom of the chamber; and "Miss Moredent," repeated the *femme de chambre*, who stood near her mistress, holding a small gold salver, on which was a glass of camphor julep. "Miss Moredent," again repeated the *femme de chambre* in a louder tone, but still the lady gave no sign of being conscious of the presence of a stranger.

"Elle devient plus sourde, tous les jours," muttered the woman, and again, and this time in so loud a key that it might have awoken the soundest sleeper, she screamed out rather than said "Miss Moredent."

Mrs. Vincent Robinson now looked towards Clara, smiled, and not only shook her head and hands, but her teeth also partook the tremulous movement that agitated her person.

"Miss Mordaunt, I am glad to see you ; yours is a very pretty name, and, though it may be a weakness, I plead guilty to liking pretty names. May I inquire your christian name ?"

"Clara, madam."

"Clara, O ! what a charming name ; there is something perfectly euphonious in the sound. But was it the real name by which you were baptised, or did you assume it, because it is so pretty ?"

Clara looked the astonishment she felt.

"O ! I see you are surprised ; *may en verité*, I was serious in the question."

"I was baptised by that name, madam."

"I beg your pardon, I did not hear you ; but the fact is, I am so *distracte*, that half my time I do not know what people are saying ; and when I am writing poetry, as was the case when you entered, I cannot let my mind down to the ordinary topics of conversation for a long time after. Do you write poetry ?"

"No, madam."

"How very odd !—I should have thought that a person named Clara Mordaunt must be a poetess !—But to resume, and *apropos de nomes*, I was baptised Mary. Yes, you may smile, and no wonder, *mais saypondant say vrai*. Now, can you imagine *me* called by the housemaid name of Mary. No ! I am sure you cannot—yet after all, who could have foretold in my infancy, when the heiress to great wealth, that I should have ever taken so seriously to literature, and become a celebrated poetess ? But with regard to my name, *j'ay changé tout sell la*, as the French say, relative to their government and customs, and I have assumed the more appropriate name of Sappho. Was I not right ? I am sure you think so. Look, there is my head as Sappho. The sculptor has not given me sufficient neck ; the truth is, there was a stain in the marble, and so I made him cut it short, for I was determined that Sappho should be stainless. But would you believe it, that wicked creature, Lord Gossamer, when I said so, laughed outright, and asked me, if I had forgotten her little *esclandre* with Phaon ? People are so censorious, Miss Mordaunt ! And then he said, he supposed the head was taken after she had broken her neck in the Leucadian leap. O ! Lord Gossamer is such a droll creature ! quite an original, I assure you."

"Mon Dieu, qu'elle est bavarde," murmured the *femme de chambre*, turning up her eyes.

“Of course, Miss Mordaunt, you know all about Sappho—*nest pau ?*”

Clara bowed in the affirmative.

“O! I am so glad, for I want to hear every particular about her, and about the Leucadian leap that Lord Gossamer talked of. I am so giddy, so *distracte*, that I cannot bear reading; indeed, even had I the inclination, I could not find time, for I am always writing whenever I have not company; so I require some person to tell me every thing, that is, to remind me of things forgotten when I have leisure, which is only when I am in my bath, or while I am dressing. I have adopted that little girl—pointing to the child—I like to keep her near me, for we form a pretty *tableau*, and people say such sweet things about it. I’ll show you some very charming verses written on the subject, by Miss Adelaide Courtney Biggs. *Victorine, montrez à Mademoiselle Mordaunt les jolies vers écrit par Mademoiselle Biggs.*”

“*Mon Dieu! qu’elle est embêtante,*” murmured Victorine, in a voice which, though too low to be audible to her mistress, was perfectly so to Clara. A richly-bound album was now shown by the *femme de chambre*, who handed it open to Clara, and the following lines met her eye:—

LINES ON MRS. VINCENT ROBINSON’S ADOPTING HER GRAND-
NIECE.

(the word *grand* nearly effaced.)

“Venus, without the wing’d boy Cupid,
Was said to mopish be, and stupid;
And Sappho, too, historians say on,
Could not exist without her Phaon.
Our modern Sappho, as good as fair,
A favourite sought, her love to share;
But wiser far than her of Greece,
’Stead of a Phaon took her niece:
To paint whose beauty my muse can’t,
She’s faultless, for she’s like her aunt.”

It was with difficulty that Clara could peruse these absurd lines with a serious face, and she had scarcely got through the task, when Mrs. Vincent Robinson asked her if they were not charming? “So graceful, so well turned,” said she. “I’m rather a judge of poetry, for I write a good deal myself; and I do assure you, except Anacreon Moore, I know no one who

could have written such pretty verses,—Rogers could not if you gave him a dukedom.”

Clara began to think that her hostess had totally forgotten the object of her visit, and timidly recurred to it.

“True, very true, I had ceased to recollect it, but I am such a giddy creature, I forget every thing,—*nest paw*, Victorine?”

“Oui, madame (qu’elle est radoteuse et ennuyeuse).”

“I wish to engage a person to instruct Ada Myrrha, and to be my amanuensis also. I had thought of engaging a gentleman for this purpose, but the world is so censorious, that really I dared not brave it. Before one has reached a certain age, one can do nothing without provoking censure. Do you compose music, Miss Mordaunt? for I want to have the songs I write set, and the persons I have hitherto employed were so abominably stupid, that they say they cannot set music to my words.—Can you imagine their stupidity? I require the person I engage, to sing well also, that she may render justice to my songs; the salary shall be liberal,—I will give 100*l.* a-year. Ada Myrrha, come here my dear, and speak to this lady.”

The child came forward timidly, and looked awkward and alarmed. “Tell Miss Mordaunt whom you love best?”

“My beautiful mamma.”

“And who is your beautiful mamma?”

“You, ma’am,” and Ada Myrrha looked with a most comical expression of countenance in the face of Mrs. Vincent Robinson.

“Le pauvre enfant commence d’être rusé,” murmured Victorine, spitefully.

“For whom were you wreathing these pretty flowers, *ma mignonne*?”

“For my beautiful mamma’s new wig, ma’am.”

“Have I not told you never to use the word wig? Say hair, always hair.”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“There, that will do, go and sit down. You must never let her into your room, Victorine; I told you so before.”

“Mais, mon Dieu, madame! que voulez-vous que je fasse.”

“I desire that you do not let her see my—” wigs, she would have said, but she remembered the presence of Clara, and said “toilette.”

“Then may I reckon on you, Miss Mordaunt? I think, with-

out vanity, I may say that you will like me, for most people do," and here she made a grimace meant to be engaging.

"I am perhaps a *leetle* spoilt, but that is not to be wondered at, considering the fuss people make about me."

Clara felt reluctant to accept an engagement from a person too ridiculous to admit of inspiring respect, yet her experience at the difficulty of finding an unobjectionable situation, added to the apparent good-nature of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, induced her to close with the offer of that lady. It was agreed that she was to enter her new situation the next day, and she departed wondering, and if the truth must be owned, not a little amused, at the eccentricity of the would-be juvenile old lady.

Abraham Jacob had been into the city, and was just returned when Clara joined him in the parlour; he asked innumerable questions about Mrs. Vincent Robinson, but was satisfied when Clara told him she appeared a kind old gentlewoman.

"I am well pleased that thou hast found her so, friend Clara," said he, "for I was alarmed at seeing in the chamber where I waited for thee a portrait of a woman, far advanced in the vale of years, so strangely habited as to make me think the original of it must have been mad. I questioned her servant as to whom it was meant to represent, and he told me it was the likeness of the mistress of the house. Verily, friend Clara, it was a most disagreeable picture, and denoted but a weak intellect in friend Robinson."

The next day saw Clara established in the mansion of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, who welcomed her with a romantic fervour of manner, more resembling that of a boarding-school girl than of an elderly woman.

"Now do, Miss Mordaunt, tell me your history," said she; "I am sure it must be very interesting. There is something in your countenance that indicates your superiority to the general class of governesses. How have you come to be one?"

"My father was unfortunate in business, madam."

"Speak a little louder, for I am so absent, that ten to one I shall forget you are speaking, unless you raise your voice."

This was a subterfuge on the part of the old lady to conceal her deafness.

"What did you say your father was?"

"He was unfortunate in business, madam."

"What! was he hanged? Dear me, how shocking!"

"Hanged, madam! how could such an idea occur to you?" and Clara's cheeks glowed with vexation and shame.

"He was *not* hanged then; well, I am very glad, for it is a very disagreeable thing to have such an occurrence in a family. The fact is, Miss Mordaunt, that I had one young lady as an amanuensis, and when I asked her some particulars relative to her father, she told me just as you have done, that he was unfortunate in business, and I, having afterwards discovered that he had been hanged for forgery, naturally enough imagined the phrase of 'unfortunate in business' meant the being hanged. I got poor Miss Bridgman to tell me the whole story, and I wrote a very pathetic novel in three volumes on it, called the 'Innocent Forger;' for innocent she assured me he was, though some barbarous bankers' clerks and other cruel people swore he was guilty. It was a most heart-rending story, and lost nothing by my manner of treating it. I excel in the pathetic; for even Mrs. Merryweather, who never shed a tear over a book before, was obliged to borrow a cambric handkerchief from me when I read it to her. By the by, Victorine—Victorine, has Mrs. Merryweather returned the pocket handkerchief I lent her?"

"Mais non, madame! she more sorry to give up le mouchoir de poche than when she cry over your nouveauté."

"Why can't you say novel? I have told you so often."

"And I have told madame to say de many words in French so many times, and madame do always forgets."

"I am so *distracte*," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, "that, would you believe it, Miss Mordaunt, I sometimes forget a word for ten minutes together, but so used Sir Walter Scott: all great writers, I believe, have this peculiarity. Now, I want you to set some verses of mine to music. Where are the last verses I wrote, Victorine?"

"I not know, madame; but I tink de are on de buveuse de madame."

"De quoi, Victorine?"

"De buveuse, madame."

"And what is that, pray?"

"Dis ting, madame," and Victorine laid her hand on the blotting-book of her mistress.

"O! true, I had forgotten, I am really so *distracte*; you must have patience with me, Miss Mordaunt, for I am a sad giddy creature."

“Elle aura bien besoin de patience, j'en réponds,” said Victorine, in a tone too low to be heard by her mistress.

“Find the verses, Victorine, I know they are not in the *buveuse*.”

“Vous faites de jolis vers, vieille folle,” muttered the *femme de chambre*. “Here is your spectacles, madame; mettez-les, and you find vat you vant.”

“Spectacles! ridiculous! just as if I had occasion for such things. You really are very original, Victorine.”

“Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! quelle vieille folle!” whispered the maid.

Clara felt exceedingly embarrassed to be thus made a witness to the impertinence and duplicity of Victorine, and carefully avoided showing any symptom of recognition of her remarks.

“Here is de verse,” said the *femme de chambre*, “before de nose of madame, who would have seen dem in one minute if madame have de lunettes.”

Mrs. Vincent Robinson looked angry, but did not express her displeasure. “Read this song, Miss Mordaunt, I am sure you will like it. Miss Adelaide Biggs says it is so beautiful that it always makes her wish herself in the country.”

“So she say that every ting la vieille folle writes is,” muttered Victorine.

“Read it aloud, if you please, Miss Mordaunt, for I do like to hear harmonious poetry read; it is pleasant to my ear, even though written by myself. I long for you to set it to music; you must have the air a very sweet one to suit the words. Begin, if you please, and raise your voice, for I am so apt to be *distracte*.”

“Sourde elle aurait dû dire,” muttered Victorine.

Clara took the paper, and, summoning all her *sang-froid* to her aid to prevent smiling, read the following specimen of namby-pamby:—

“O! let me, by some purling stream,
Through sultry hours unconscious dream;
My brow fann'd by the soft sweet breeze,
That gently murmurs through the trees.”

“Is not that a charming verse, Miss Mordaunt?—and so new and original, too. I never write poetry like other people. Go on to the second verse, you will be delighted with it. Miss Adelaide Courteney Biggs and Mrs. Merryweather rave of it.”

“ Or let me stray 'mid verdant bowers,
And cull the fresh and fragrant flowers;
Or in the limpid glassy wave,
Unseen, my throbbing bosom lave.”

“ Mon Dieu ! vat rheumaticks madame would have if she go into the vater,” said Victorine.

“ Victorine is so matter-of-fact, that she takes every thing *au pied de la lettre*, Miss Mordaunt. Her observations amuse me, she is so *knave*.”

“ Me knave, madam ! no one did never call me knave before,—I am not rogue at all ;” and the Frenchwoman looked very indignant.

“ I did not call you rogue, Victorine ; you are mistaken.”

“ But I see in de dictionnaire dat knave is rogue, madame, and I not like to be called names.”

“ Pray go on, Miss Mordaunt ; I long to hear you read the other verses.”

“ Or let me o'er the moon-lit tide,
Within my light bark smoothly glide,
My eyes fix'd on the stars above,
Forgetting all save Heaven and love.”

“ Qu'elle est ridicule, seigneur—qu'elle est ridicule !—une vieille fée comme elle, rêver de l'amour !” muttered Victorine.

“ Now is not that verse charming, Miss Mordaunt ? Pray, when you are composing the music, pay attention that, at that verse, it becomes soft and languid—much depends on this. The ideas are quite new, are they not ? I am, I believe, the first person who has thought, or at least, who has expressed the thought, of sailing o'er the water by moonlight, and looking at the stars, and thinking of love. Yet, would you believe it, Miss Mordaunt, some people have been so spiteful as to insinuate, nay, even to say, that other poets have written on the same subject, and that ill-natured Mrs. Mervyn Wilbraham declares that Moore has done so. But this is all sheer envy, nothing more. I am sure you agree with me in thinking so.”

Luckily for Clara's veracity, or at least for her desire of not offending Mrs. Vincent Robinson, that lady never gave her time to answer when she solicited her opinion on her verses.

“ Well, Miss Mordaunt, if you have been delighted, as you say you have” (Clara not having said a word on the subject),
“ with the first three verses, what will you say when you read

the fourth? Pray read on,—you really add new beauties to my verses by your manner of reading them.”

“Then as the breeze in wanton sport
Among my tresses loves to float,
How sweet ’t will be to close my eyes,
And think of him who for me sighs.”

“What do you think of that? Is it not delicious?”

“A-t-on jamais rencontré une vieille folle pareille; elle est, ma foi, par trop ridicule. Parlant de ses cheveux, quand tout le monde sait qu’elle a porté perruque depuis quarante ans.”

“Now, Miss Mordaunt, I depend on you to set this song to music,—plaintive, tender music; and I shall expect to hear you sing it at my next soirée.”

At this moment a loud noise at the door was heard, and Victorine opened it to see what was the matter, when Fidelio, the lap-dog of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, rushed in, holding in his mouth her newest wig, which he had nearly pulled to pieces.

“What has he got?” asked his mistress.

“O! le méchant chien,—he have de best vig, donnez-la, coquin, de suite.”

“What, my new wig! *where* did you leave it, and *why* place it in his way?”

“I not place notings in his vay, madame; he is so vicked dog, he take every ting—il est un vrai diable de chien.”

“How provoking! had it been any of the others I should not have minded, but *that* wig, made after a coiffure of a bust of Sappho,—it is too bad. But you are always leaving things in the dog’s way.”

“Vas it I, madame, as left poor Ma’m selle Ada Myrrha in his vay, ven he tore all her robe and jupon in pieces, and did bite her little leg and hand, because she did try to drive him away? God he know, I am expecting dat de poor child will go mad one dese days.”

Clara shuddered, and Mrs. Vincent Robinson reddened with anger.

“A *propos*, where is the child?” asked she, anxious to get rid of her maid. “Go and see what she is doing.”

“J’en répons, que j’arrangerai votre vilain chien bientôt, vieille fée Carabosse,” muttered Victorine, as she left the chamber, shaking the torn wig with one hand, and pulling the dog with the other.

"Come here, Ada Myrrha," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, as the child was led into the room by Victorine.

"Pauvre enfant, comme elle est à plaindre," whispered Victorine.

"Have you finished the garland of flowers that I gave you to tie up?"

"No, ma'am."

"And why not?"

"Don't be angry, beautiful mamma."

"Non, ma mignonne, come and kiss me, but be gentle; there, that will do. Now tell me why you have not finished the garland?"

Here the child began to weep; and Mrs. Vincent Robinson, losing patience, said, "You know, Ada Myrrha, I don't like children that cry."

"I am very sorry, beautiful mamma, but indeed I could not help it."

"Help what, child? do tell me at once what you mean?" The child's tears streamed afresh, and she sobbed aloud. "Really you are very tormenting, child, I must say. Why do you weep?"

"Because I am afraid that beautiful mamma will be angry with me, but indeed I could not help it."

"Help what, I ask you again?"

"Fidelio came and tore all the roses, and when I tried to prevent him, he tore my frock."

"Have I not told you, Ada Myrrha, never to say frock, but always to say tunic?"

"Yes, beautiful mamma, but I forgot."

"Well, be a good child, and don't cry any more."

"But my leg pains me so, beautiful mamma," and the tears flowed afresh.

"Your leg, child, and what has happened to your leg?"

"O! don't be angry, indeed I could not help it, but Fidelio did bite me so."

"And why, you little stupid thing, did you not say so at first?"

"Because beautiful mamma was always so angry with me when Fidelio bit me before;" and Ada Myrrha sobbed.

The *femme de chambre* looked with a spiteful pleasure at her mistress, and then at Clara, who rose, and approaching the weeping child, took her on her knee, wiped the tears from her

cheeks, and, raising her dress, discovered her stocking stained with blood, the consequence of the bite of the dog.

“You must not spoil Ada Myrrha, Miss Mordaunt,” said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, in a sharper tone of voice than Clara had yet heard her speak in.

“The child is really injured, madam, and I think surgical aid ought to be resorted to.”

“Oui, si c’était l’enfant qui eût mordu le chien, on aurait cherché un médecin, parce que notre méchante vieille folle aime mieux son chien que la pauvre petite,” muttered Victorine.

“O! it’s only a mere scratch, nothing more I assure you; it is of no sort of consequence, and will teach that troublesome child not to torment the dog any more.”

“Indeed, beautiful mamma, I never do torment Fidelio, but he always torments me.”

“Take her away, wash her leg, and put fresh stockings on.”

Clara was so shocked and disgusted at the want of feeling of this unnatural old woman, that the ridiculous traits which she had previously observed in her character, and the absurdities in her manner, now struck her as being more unpardonable than she before thought them, so odious did this union of hardness of heart and folly appear to her to be.

“Now, Miss Mordaunt, I will give you a high treat,” said Mrs. Vincent Robinson. “You shall read in my album some of the verses addressed to me,” and she applied a gold key, attached to a chain worn round her neck, to a splendidly bound book, and pointed to the following lines, which she requested Clara to read aloud. “Pray, attend to the elegance of the epigrammatic turn given to the verses. They were written by one of the most remarkable men of our day—a statesman, and, I need not add, a poet, for this exquisite *morceau* proves it. Any woman but me, Miss Mordaunt, would have had her head turned by the homage I have received. Ever since my infancy, warriors, statesmen, poets, and men of letters, have joined in declaring me the most peerless of my sex. But I am not at all spoilt by it. No! I have never lost the beautiful simplicity of my character, that exquisite sensibility which has rendered me so popular. How you will love me when you know me better! But I will not keep you any longer from the poem.”

LINES ON SEEING THE LOVELY MRS. VINCENT ROBINSON
WALKING IN THE PARK, ATTENDED BY HER DOGS.

“Not Venus, when she left the ocean,
Gliding along with graceful motion,
More beautiful could look than thou,
With that sweet smile and placid brow:
The goddess follow’d was by doves,
Thou in thy train hast dogs and loves.”

“Is not that charming? Ah! yes, Miss Mordaunt, I had dogs then—now, alas! I have but one, for my dear Venus died last year. That was a heavy affliction;” and here Mrs. Vincent Robinson applied her handkerchief to her eyes. “Now, pray read the next poem, addressed to me on the publication of my first novel.”

Clara was on the point of obeying this command, when Victorine entered.

“Do you know, madam, dat de poor chilt’s leg is very bad. It would be well to have de doctore to look at it.”

“Stuff—nonsense! You say that merely because you heard Miss Mordaunt recommend it. You see, Miss Mordaunt, the folly of putting things into people’s heads.”

“No von will put de sense into your old head, nor de feeling into your hard heart,” muttered the *femme de chambre*.

Fidelio, who was seated on his mistress’s knee, now gave sundry symptoms of indisposition.

“Good Heavens! what is, can be the matter with my darling Fidelio?—see how ill the dear creature is. O dear! send directly for Dr. Dolittle, and tell the footman to inform him of the symptoms of my darling, that he may come prepared with a remedy.” This order being complied with, Mrs. Vincent Robinson continued to caress Fidelio, and exhibit every possible demonstration of affection for the disagreeable animal. “O! should I lose you, my darling,” said she, “what am I to do? It was only a minute before you came in, Victorine, that I had Miss Mordaunt to read that exquisite poem written on seeing me attended by my dogs.”

“Ah! oui, madame, I do remember, that verse which Mrs. Herbert Figgin did write, when you did give her dat new silk robe and two louis.”

“You mistake, Victorine; the poem was written by one of the most remarkable men in England.”

“Pardon, madame, I very well remember Mrs. Figgin did

read the vers out loud all about Venus and de doves, and de dogs; and you did give her de robe and de two louis."

Mrs. Vincent Robinson looked angry and embarrassed, but knowing by experience the pertinacity with which Victorine adhered to any statement once made by her, she let the subject drop, and resumed her attentions to Fidelio.

"What do you think is the matter with the dear creature, Victorine?" asked she.

"I do tink, madam, dat de piece of Ma'mselle Ada Myrrha's leg, vich he have eaten, have disagreed vid his stomach, and give him de indigest." And the *femme de chambre* gave an irresistibly comical smile, wholly lost on her mistress owing to her short-sightedness.

"But are you sure he swallowed it, Victorine? What a horrid thing! The poor dear dog! That little troublesome girl is always tormenting him, and, unless prevented, will ruin his health. Dear pretty creature!—he was a darling, and his mistress's pet, so he was; tiss me, mistress's darling."

"Quelle méchante vieille bête," muttered Victorine.

"Now, Miss Mordaunt, will you compose the music for my song. I hope you will have done it in half an hour, for I have letters for you to write."

"I am fearful, madam, that you have imposed on me a task I am incapable of fulfilling, I never did compose any music."

"This is very disagreeable. I thought you could do every thing in this sort of way. Surely there can be no difficulty in setting such beautiful verses as mine to music?"

"I will endeavour to make the attempt, but should I not succeed, madam, I hope you will pardon me."

"O! certainly; but I confess I shall be greatly disappointed if you do not set the song well."

When Clara was returning from the music-room, where she had remained some time endeavouring to fulfil the wishes of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, a task she performed very little to her own satisfaction, she encountered Dr. Dolittle in conversation on the stairs with Victorine.

"I do tell you, monsieur le docteur, dat de poor child is bitten very badly by dat dog, and I do hope you vill look at her leg. Here is Miss Moredent, who vill tell you de same."

Clara confirmed the statement of Victorine, and the doctor accompanied her and the *femme de chambre* to the room of the

child. The poor little girl had wept herself to sleep, and the sobs that even in slumber agitated her fair and little chest bore evidence to the sorrow in which she had been plunged previously to it. She was awake by the doctor's feeling her pulse, and the first words she uttered were, "Indeed, I could not help it." There was something so touching in the patient resignation of so young a creature, that Clara stooped down, and pressed her lips to her fair and open forehead; and the child looked up at her with surprise, but, catching a view of Victorine, she reached out her little arms to embrace her, and said, "dear good Victorine—Victorine loves poor Mary."

"Je crois bien, mon pauvre petit ange, ça serait un cœur bien dur qui ne t'aimerait pas."

From that moment Clara forgot all the instances of what she had heretofore considered the impertinence and duplicity of Victorine towards her ridiculous old mistress, and learned to appreciate her for qualities which she had not previously imagined her to possess.

"Don't tell *somebody* that Miss Mordaunt kissed Mary, or likes her," said the child, "or she will be angry."

"Voyez-vous, mademoiselle," whispered Victorine to Clara, "comme cette malheureuse enfant, jeune comme elle est, a senti que cette vieille méchante femme ne l'aime pas, et ne peut souffrir que les autres lui montrent aucune preuve d'affection?"

Clara felt reluctant at being compelled to listen to such severe though merited animadversions on the person beneath whose roof she was dwelling, and whose stipend she was to receive; but this was not the moment to explain her sentiments on that point to Victorine, so she merely whispered in return her hopes that the child was not already cunning and deceitful, and instanced her reason for fearing it by the example of her always so studiously calling Mrs. Vincent Robinson her "beautiful mamma" when in the presence of that lady, and designated her only by the sobriquet of *somebody* in her absence.

"Pauvre enfant, elle y est forcée; la vieille exige qu'elle la nomme toujours comme cela. Même elle la punit quand elle l'oublie; elle a voulu aussi qu'elle ne réponde qu'au nom d'Ada Myrrha, malgré que l'enfant est nommée Mary."

Doctor Dolittle applied a cooling lotion to the child's leg, administered gentle medicine to her, and then was withdraw-

ing, when Victorine asked him if he did not consider it advisable to have the wound cauterized, and the dog killed; but he, who was never disposed to any but gentle remedies, declared such a precaution to be quite unnecessary, as the dog, he asserted, was not in a rabid state.

“Ve all know dat de dog is not a rabbit,” said Victorine, “it require no doctore to know dat; but we not know if he is mad, or may not become mad; so I hope you will have every ting done dat is right. As madame pay very vell for de doctores for her dog, you may also attend the chilt, but you must not say you have seen dis poor leetle girl, oderwise she will scold me.”

He promised obedience, and a summons for Victorine having now rung from her mistress's chamber, and another having followed it for Clara, the two proceeded there, followed by the doctor.

“I hope the song is finished, Miss Mordaunt? You have been very long about it!”

“Yes! madam.”

“Victorine, is the doctor—oh! here he is—I'm so glad, doctor, you are come. Here is this dear creature so poorly, I am quite alarmed about him. Only see how ill he looks. Victorine says he has been made ill by having bitten my little niece. Do, pray, give him some remedy; I had no idea the dear animal could suffer from such a cause.”

“Why, to say the truth, madam,” said the doctor dryly, “I should think such a disaster much more likely to be attended by dangerous consequences to the *bitten*, than the *biter*.”

“O dear! no; the child is so strong, nothing can hurt *her*; beside she's used to it, for the dog has bitten her very often.”

“Then I should have thought, madam, that the dog would also be used to it, and that consequently it could not suffer from that cause,” and here Dr. Dolittle smiled self-complacently.

“Probably the poor dear creature never swallowed the morsel before, my dear doctor, which Victorine assures me he has done in this instance.”

“O! that makes all the difference, madam,” said the sapient doctor; who, with as much gravity as if he had to examine the infant heir of some noble house, inspected Mrs. Vincent Robinson's canine favourite.

“ You look grave, doctor,” said she ; “ is there any danger of my losing this dear, this precious animal ? ”

“ Why, madam, to say the truth, there is considerable excitement, but don't be unnecessarily alarmed. I dare say that with repose and proper treatment, Fidelio will soon be restored to convalescence. Here is a prescription that must be carefully attended to. Would you wish me to look in on the little girl ? ”

“ O no ! I don't see any necessity.”

“ Then I shall have the honour, a pleasure it never can be, of wishing you good morning ; ” and off tripped Doctor Dottle, whose name was truly very appropriate to his mode of treating his patients.

“ Victorine, order a bath of warm rose-water to be prepared for Fidelio, with a few drops of opium in it, which may tranquillize the dear creature's nerves.”

“ Oui, madame ; and would it not be well to put poor Miss Ada Myrrha into a warm bath also, for she seems very feverish and restless.”

“ Do just as you please about that, but really I see no necessity, for I dare say she will be as well as ever to-morrow.”

“ And now, Miss Mordaunt, pray sing me the song you have composed ; sing it in a plaintive style.”

Never had Clara felt less disposed to sing than at this moment, but a recollection of her dependent situation, one of the chief of the many miseries of which consists in being compelled to do that which the dependent least likes, and at the time when it is the most irksome, urged her to fulfil her task. The voice is, perhaps, one of the organs most influenced by the mind, and Clara became painfully sensible of this, when she endeavoured to throw some expression into hers, in singing the music to which she set the namby-pamby verses of Mrs. Vincent Robinson. That lady, happily for her *dame de compagnie*, was not a fastidious critic, and as she listened to the sweet notes and clear articulation of Clara, she pronounced the music to be charming.

“ Why, you said you were not a composer, Miss Mordaunt,” said she ; “ you greatly underrated your talents, for I do assure you, and I am no *médiocre connaisseuse*, that nothing can be more admirable than the manner in which you have set my song ; but I see it is time to dress for dinner. You will accompany me to the Opera,—adieu, signorina ! ”

“And must I exhibit myself in public with this foolish old woman?” Clara was on the point of saying to herself, when she recollected that eating the bread of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and receiving a salary from her, it would ill become her to deride, or depreciate her employer. Yet, as she thought of her conduct towards the poor child under her protection, she found it difficult to think of her with any other sentiment than contempt and dislike. Before dressing for dinner, she went to the chamber of the little invalid, whom she found reclining in the arms of Victorine.

“Dere, dere, be good child, I come to you, my dere, when your aunt be dressed, and I stay vid you all of de evening.”

“Dear good Victorine! Mary loves Victorine dearly.”

“I will stay with your little charge for half an hour, Mademoiselle Victorine,” said Clara.

“Dat is very good of you, ma chère demoiselle; but you must be dressed in time, or dat *vieille folle* will be so angry.”

“Oblige me by not speaking disrespectfully of Mrs. Vincent Robinson.”

“Comment, est-il possible dat you do respect her?”

“I am a willing inmate beneath her roof, and I receive her money; consequently I *ought* not, *cannot*, hear her spoken ill of.”

“Dis is very strange; I do not understand notings of dis. You pity dis pauvre petit ange, I know you do, for I see de tears come into your eyes ven you looked at her. How den can you respect dat woman who behave so bad, who love her dog better?”

“Silence, je vous en prie; ne blessez pas cet enfant.”

“You have de raison, Mademoiselle. Ah! à present je commence à comprendre. Ah! oui! vous ne la respectez pas, mais vous——”

Here Mrs. Vincent Robinson's bell rang so violently, that Victorine, gently disengaging herself from the child, hastily left the apartment. Clara sat by the bed, and took the little girl's hand, who looked at her with an expression of such affectionate mildness, that she embraced her fondly.

“You do not suffer any pain now, dear Ada?”

“Don't call me Ada; no one loves me that calls me by that name, and I should so like you to love me.”

“Shall I call you Myrrha then?”

“O no! call me Mary; every one loved me when I was called Mary. That was, when I was at home, before dear,

dear mamma went to Heaven. Mamma, that is my own mamma was not a beautiful mamma like *somebody* that makes me call *her* beautiful mamma. O ! no ; *she* was not at all beautiful, for she was just like you."

Clara could scarcely refrain from smiling at the *naïveté* of the child.

"She was so fair, and so pink, just like that pretty rose on the table, that good Victorine gave me. She had long, long hair, so soft, and so shining, and she did not wear a wig at all ; and never took out her teeth at night to put them in a glass. And *her* hands were so soft, and so white, and not a bit hard or skinny. O ! no ; *she* was not a bit beautiful, not a bit, though a great many people said she was ; and Victorine, when she saw her picture, said she was beautiful, and that made me cry, for I do not like people to say that my own dear good mamma, who is in Heaven, is beautiful like *somebody*. And then when I cried, the beautiful mamma took away the picture and locked it up ; but I dream of it very often, and then I wish to go to Heaven too, to my dear good mamma."

Clara could not restrain the tears that filled her eyes, which the child seeing, said, "Now, now, you look just like my dear mamma that is in Heaven, when she kissed me the last time ; only she was whiter in the face, and she cried too, and said, 'my own Mary, never be naughty, or wilful, never get into a passion ; pray to God to make you a good child, that we may meet in Heaven.' And I do try to be good, and not to be in a passion ; even when Fidelio bites me, but he does hurt me, and frighten me so, and then I know beautiful mamma will blame me, for *she* loves Fidelio always, but never loves me except before company. And then when I think she loves me a little, I begin to love her a great deal, and then she tells me not to be troublesome, and looks at me in a way that makes me feel quite cold, and I get afraid of her. But don't tell her, pray don't."

The return of Victorine put an end to the innocent revelations of the interesting child, whom Clara embraced with a feeling of love and pity, that not only achieved the conquest of the little creature's heart, but that also of the well-disposed but petulant *femme de chambre*, who demanded of her with earnestness—"Eh bien ! mademoiselle, n'est-ce pas qu'elle est un pauvre petit ange ? Est-ce qu'on a jamais vu une

créature si douce, si aimante qu'elle? Pour moi, je vous assure que je l'adore; et si ce n'était pas pour elle, j'aurais quitté la maison il y a long-temps. Quand vous serez parti pour l'Opéra, j'irai chercher un bon chirurgien pour examiner sa pauvre petite jambe, qui m'inquiète."

"You eat soup, I observe, Miss Mordaunt," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, soon after they were seated at dinner."

"Yes, madam."

"Is that prudent? Are you not afraid it will injure your voice?"

"I was not aware, madam, that it was injurious, and indeed my voice is so mediocre."

"I do not find it so, and consequently you must not impair it, for I shall often call on you to exercise it in singing my songs, for I mean you to set them all to music. You will therefore oblige me by abstaining from soup."

"Certainly, madam, if you desire it."

The *maître-d'hôtel* now offered Clara some salmon, which she accepted.

"I am so short-sighted that I cannot see what you have been helped to; but I hope you do not intend to eat anything so indigestible as fish. Mirrafleur, take away Miss Mordaunt's plate. Fish is destructive to the voice, so indeed are all things difficult to be digested." Some *petits pâtés* were now handed round, and Clara was on the point of conveying one from the dish to her plate, when Mrs. Vincent Robinson prohibited it: — "Pastry in every shape, Miss Mordaunt, is ruinous to the stomach, and of course to the voice. I cannot permit you to indulge in it."

During this time Mrs. Vincent Robinson was doing ample justice to the prohibited dishes, and Clara was playing with, rather than eating, a morsel of bread.

"What are you eating, Miss Mordaunt?"

"A little bread, madam."

"Bread, bless me! you must by no means eat bread, except with animal food. There will be some Welch mutton presently, and some chicken, and you may partake of either of those dishes. A little more salmon, Mirrafleur, and tell the cook the sauce is not quite picquante enough. I have so delicate an appetite, Miss Mordaunt, that I can eat nothing unless I have a sauce picquante."

Her plate being changed, the lady now helped herself to

two *pâtés à la béchamel*, which were soon dispatched, and a third asked for, and then the *rôti* made its appearance.

“Mirrafleur, help Miss Mordaunt to a small slice of mutton, and be careful not to give fat or gravy; nothing is more injurious to the voice than greasy substances. You drink porter, I hope, Miss Mordaunt; that is excellent for singers. Pasta and Malibran always drank porter, and told me they found it excellent for the voice.”

“I never drink malt liquor, madam.”

“But you surely won’t refuse to do what will be serviceable to your voice; that really would be absurd. Mirrafleur, help Miss Mordaunt to some porter, I ordered some purposely for you, knowing how advantageous it is for singers.”

Clara felt annoyed at finding herself treated as a child, or rather as an automaton, but having water within her reach, she helped herself to some, unseen by her purblind hostess, who was too busily occupied discussing a *fricassée de poulet* to attend to her companion.

“A little more mutton, if you please,” said Clara timidly to the servant, who was removing her plate.

“What! have you already finished the large slice to which Mirrafleur helped you? I have always heard that singers were voracious eaters, which is unfortunate, considering how pernicious it is to their voices, and you would do well, Miss Mordaunt, not to give way to your appetite.”

Now, be it known to our readers, few accusations are more annoying to young ladies than that of having robust appetites. Clara’s was peculiarly delicate, but the slice of mutton served to her by Mirrafleur was so small, that it did not exceed in size the wing of a very juvenile spring chicken; consequently, to be not only denied a second slice, but accused of having an enormous appetite, was any thing but agreeable to her. She, however, submitted in silence to the despotism exercised by Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and became an unoccupied spectatress of the havoc made by that lady on the *fricassée*, and subsequently on the roast mutton; the *gourmande* asserting between each fresh help, that *she* had the most puny appetite in the world, and eat so slowly, that those with the most voracious ones finished their repasts before she had half got through hers. Dinner being ended, Mrs. Vincent Robinson ordered Victorine to be sent to her, who soon entered with the rouge, fan, smelling-bottle, and bouquet of her mistress.

“ You may retire for a few minutes, Miss Mordaunt, as I have some instructions to give to my *femme de chambre*.”

Clara withdrew, but before she reached the door, heard her hostess warn Victorine never to let Miss Mordaunt see her rouge, as she did not intend to let her even suspect that she wore any.”

“ Mais, madame, tout le monde——”

Clara waited not to hear the conclusion of the sentence. She was soon summoned to attend Mrs. Vincent Robinson, who confided to her care the charge of her reticule, fan, smelling-bottle, bouquet, and opera-glass, and perceiving that Clara knew not how to carry these various articles, condescended to instruct her.

“ The reticule you can hang on your arm, the fan likewise, the bouquet will fill one hand, the smelling-bottle and opera-glass the other. There, that will do ; you see how easy it is to manage all this with a little *esprit*—yes, with a little *esprit* much may be done ; and now, Miss Mordaunt, give me your arm, always give me your arm, for my feet are so small, so *mignonne*, that ever since I was a baby I never could walk without assistance. Have you remarked my feet ? do look at them—did you ever see such small feet before ?”

“ Quelle vieille folle ! mon dieu—quelle vieille folle !” muttered Victorine.

When the carriage stopped at the entrance to the Opera House, Clara, as commanded, gave her arm to Mrs. Vincent Robinson, who presented so ludicrous an appearance, that the crowd of idle gazers collected round the arcade burst into shouts of laughter. The two tall footmen who followed their mistress could with difficulty prevent some of the mob from pressing on her steps, and it was only the timely presence of two or three of the police that saved her from insult.

“ Look at the painted old Jezabel,” said one.

“ My heyes, how are you off for raddle ?” asked another.

“ Vy, hang me, if that ere pretty gal aint ashamed to be seen with that old wixen,” observed a third ; and their remarks were received with peals of laughter by the listeners.

Seldom had Clara felt more embarrassed or alarmed than at thus finding herself exposed to the gaze and vulgar *plaisanteries* of a crowd ; but it produced no other notice from her companion, whose deafness precluded her hearing what was said, than—

“ You observe how the people follow and look at me.

Surely the beautiful Lady Coventry never was more admired; but I have got used to it now, and it rather amuses than annoys me. This curiosity and admiration is one of the penalties one must pay for celebrity, and I do assure you, that I expect, when my next novel appears, that I shall be hardly allowed to pass through the streets; and yet, after all the triumph which you have now witnessed, would you believe it, the publishers are so stupid, so blind to their own interests, that they refuse to buy my works, and will only publish them on conditions of a division of profits, which profits they profess never appear; so that literally I make nothing by my writings but *fame*, yet that, I must say, consoles me."

Seated in her box, Mrs. Vincent Robinson now applied herself to the *libretto* of the Opera, of which she could not decypher a single word, owing to her disdaining the use of spectacles, and Clara could not forbear a smile when, leaning forward to adjust the shawl of her companion, she saw the book turned upside down, which that lady was pretending to read. In a short time a succession of visitors dropped in, consisting for the most part of middle-aged or young men, whose toilettes exhibited a shabby finery, and whose manners displayed an obsequiousness and servility, that impressed her with no good opinion of them. Each and all addressed the owner of the box, in a style of hyperbolical compliments, that no less surprised than disgusted Clara, whilst the lady to whom they were directed received them as the homage justly due to her.

"Mind you return the Opera tickets to-morrow," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson; "now don't make any mistake, for I have promised them to some other *literati* for the next Opera."

"I have ventured, madam, to bring a few lines addressed to your eye-brows," said a middle-aged man, with a Scotch accent, and wearing spectacles.

"O dear! how original! do let me hear them, pray; you know how impatient I am; so, I believe, are all people of genius."

The poor man fumbled in his pocket, and at length drew out a pocket-handkerchief, which gave irrefragable proofs of his addiction to snuff, and from its folds took the paper he was in search of.

"Give me the paper. O! horrid! take it away, take it

away; it smells of all manner of horrid things! Do, Miss Mordaunt, pour some of the perfume out of my *flacon* on it."

"I soleecit pardon, madam,—I was not aware that you disliked the smell of snuff."

Clara really felt pity for the poor man, but Mrs. Vincent Robinson continued to make wry faces, and hold her bouquet to her nose. Unfortunately, while indulging in these contortions of countenance, one of her eye-brows, which, for the first time Clara perceived were *postiche*, and *only* hers because she had bought them, became loosened, and remaining attached but at one corner, hung down over her cheek-bone, giving her face the most ludicrous expression imaginable. She was half tempted to inform Mrs. Vincent Robinson of the circumstance, but as the deafness of that lady precluded the information being conveyed in a whisper, she shrank from drawing the attention of the persons in the box to it.

"Now that your poem is perfumed, Mr. Macalister, you may read it, as there is nothing particular going on."

This was said while Grisi was warbling one of her finest airs, and Clara was listening with delight to the dulcet strains. Mr. Macalister, thus commanded, read the following lines:—

"Sappho, when I behold thy *eebon* broo,
Glossy and arch'd even as I see it noo,
I feel no poet could refrain a *soonneet*,
If he but dared employ his muse upon eet.

"O! *he*, if language were not weak, might tell
How in that *eebon* arch there lurks a spell,
To witch at will the raptured gazers' hearts;
It is the boo whence Cupid shoots his darts."

These absurd lines were recited in so loud a voice, in order to be audible to the lady to whom they were addressed, that they attracted the notice of the *parterre*, and drew forth an angry reproof. Clara felt her cheeks glow with shame, as all eyes were turned on the box; but Mrs. Vincent Robinson received this notice as a homage offered to her presence.

"Really, Mr. Macalister, the lines are very pretty—very pretty, indeed. Take them, Miss Mordaunt, and paste them into my album when we get home."

"I too, ma'am, have ventured to write a few lines on your teeth," said a young Hibernian, "and, 'pon my honour and soul! they're a mighty pretty subject."

"On my teeth?—how odd!"

"Be my honour, ma'am, I think they are very even, in place of very odd. Is 'nt that a pretty playful repartee, Mr. Macalister?"

"I dinna ken the wit of it, Mr. O'Shoughnessey."

"Then more is the pity; and you've a great loss, I can tell ye."

"I'm not incleened to think so, young gentlemon."

"Then, may be, you might be brought to raison. I know a capital way of bringing people to one's opinion when they are not *incleened*," and the Hibernian imitated the pronunciation of the Scotsman in the word "*inclined*," in a very droll manner.

"Ye must even get a leetle more wisdom in your pate, before ye can bring me to your opinion, I can tell ye, sir."

"Don't you think the fear of a *leetle* more lead in *your* pate might have the effect? What would you say to a *leetle* gunpowder tea, with the sugar of lead in it, Mr. Macalister?"

"Hoot awa', young mon, I'm na for ony of your *none-sense*."

"Pray, gentlemen, be quiet, or leave my box; I cannot allow of any quarrel on my account. If Mr. O'Shonessey (anglicising the Milesian name) admires my teeth, and writes verses on them, he surely has as good a right to do so as you, Mr. Macalister, have to write on my eyebrows."

"Silence! silence!" shouted the *parterre*, in accents not only "loud but deep;" and again all eyes were directed to the box, the door of which opened, and in glided a man, whose appearance offered a striking contrast to that of its other male occupants.

"Mr. Macalister, will you go and find a place in the *parterre*—the ticket admits you there," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, smiling graciously all the time to the new arrival, who was staring at Clara. "And you, Mr. O'Shonessey, you can also find a place in the *parterre*."

"Then, be me honour and soul,

"There's not a flower in the *parterre*,
That can with your sweet self compare."

"Brava, bravissima!" said the stranger.

"Yes, really, it is a very neat impromptu," observed Mrs. Vincent Robinson.

Mr. Macalister had withdrawn, as had also the two other male attendants of the owner of the box, and Mr. O'Shoughnessey stood as if unwilling to depart.

"Pray, do not let my presence derange any of your party," said the stranger.

"Why, I'd just like to stay to repate the verses I made on your teeth—it would not take me long—and here they are," drawing a paper from his pocket. "I'm thinking you'll not find 'em smelling of tobacco or snuff, like the verses of that ould Macalister; for I bought a bottle of lavender water to put on my handkerchief, just to make the paper smell sweet."

"Lavender water!—O! how dreadful!—what could you have been thinking of, Mr. Shonessey, to buy lavender water?"

"Well, then, sure if I knew you preferred bergamot, I'd have got it."

"Worse and worse; whoever heard of such things?"

"Why, faith! if I remembered it, sure I had only to let your sweet fingers touch the paper, and it would become as sweet as violets."

"Surely, madam," said the stranger, "nothing can be more elegantly turned than this gentleman's compliment, and I hope you will permit me to hear the verses on your teeth."

All this was uttered with an expression of such mockery, that Clara wondered that the Hibernian did not observe it.

"O! Lord Banterwell, if *you* wish it, certainly," replied Mrs. Vincent Robinson. And Mr. O'Shoughnessey read the following effusion with a brogue that rendered them still more amusing—the lady playing with her fan all the time.

"Ne'er spake of orient pearls from out the briny deep,
Far fairer are the snowy ones your coral lips doth keep
Prisoners, until a rosy smile reveals them to the light,
Glittering as doth the milky way on some unclouded night.
Had Cadmus, 'stead of dragons' teeth, your pearly treasures sown,
Not armed men but Cupids from the bright seed had grown;
And they'd have fought to share your smiles, as all us poets do,
For you're the queen of wit and grace, as well as beauty too."

"Excellent, i' faith!" said Lord Banterwell, "and how gracefully and appropriately the classical allusion is introduced. You are a happy, and may well be a proud woman, *ma belle amie*, to inspire poets to write such productions; and I beg leave to congratulate this gentleman," (bowing to

O'Shoughnessey,) "on a poem, that in attic wit, and harmonious versification, emulates the best of your countryman Moore's early poetry."

This speech was uttered with a gravity that might have imposed on a less inexperienced person than the Hibernian, who, unsuspecting of guile, was enraptured with the false praise of the laughter-loving peer.

"O! my lord, how can I express my sense of your goodness—your politeness. Indeed, and I'm highly flattered, and greatly delighted with your praise; and if your lordship would only be so kind as to write down what you have just said, it might be the making of my fortune; for I could take it round and show it to all the magazine proprietors and publishers, and they'd be sure to give me employment."

It saddened Clara to observe the joy and hope that sparkled in the eyes of the poor Irishman, knowing how fallacious was the grounds for them; but O'Shoughnessey was not easily depressed, and the blank look and silence of Lord Banterwell did not check his aspirations.

Mrs. Vincent Robinson, who though so obtuse in all cases where self was in question, was not deficient in perception when any of her poetasters were becoming troublesome to her fashionable acquaintances, unceremoniously told O'Shoughnessey that he had better go to the *parterre*, as the heat was insufferable in her box.

He withdrew, but not until he had reminded Lord Banterwell of his previous request, and begged permission to wait on his lordship the ensuing day, for his flattering and delightful *written* opinion.

"Where do you discover all your tame poets, Mrs. Vincent Robinson?" asked the peer, with a most ironical expressive countenance. "Do you advertise for them, as some people do for servants?"

"*Quelle idée!*" said the lady; and wishing to change the subject, for she dreaded the ridicule of Lord Banterwell, she asked him how he liked the Opera of Lucretzia?

"Before I give any opinion, I must hear yours, for no one is so good a judge of music and poetry as Mrs. Vincent Robinson."

"You flatter me."

"*Pas du tout*, and now let me hear what you think of the *libretto*, which I saw you studying so attentively before I en-

tered your box. I assure you all my neighbours in the stalls were edified by your attention to it."

"Why the truth is, Lord Banterwell, I am so partial to the Italian language, that I like to read it. I confess, however, that the opera has disappointed, nay more, has surprised me, it has so wholly deviated from the historical facts. Lucretia, the chaste Lucretia, who could not survive the insult offered to her by Tarquin, is in this opera represented as a monster of vice. Brutus is not once introduced, though he, you know, my dear lord, cut a conspicuous figure in that tragedy. He it was, if my memory does not fail me, who held up the dagger stained with the blood of the self-murdered lady, and harangued the people. I remember repeating aloud the speech when I was a child."

"Delicious!" murmured Lord Banterwell, scarcely able to suppress his laughter, and looking at Clara, to observe how she bore this trial of her power of control over *her* risible faculties. "Your memory is prodigious, Mrs. Vincent Robinson; I quite envy you the possession of such a treasure. The libretto, it is true, has materially swerved from the Roman history; and in the Lucretia of this opera, no one but a person of your extraordinary powers of discrimination could discover that of the chaste wife of Collatinus."

"Really, my dear lord, I am quite delighted that *you* think as I do; *le bows esprits se rencontrent*."

"With what a pure accent you speak French, Mrs. Vincent Robinson."

"Why people *do* say, that I have the true Parisian accent."

"Will you do me the honour of presenting me to this lady?" asked Lord Banterwell, who had seldom taken his eyes off the face of Clara, and who had made many useless attempts to establish a conversation with her, as well as to draw her into a smile at the quizzing he was bestowing on her companion.

"Miss Mordaunt, Lord Banterwell; this, my dear lord, is my new *dam de company*."

"An acquisition on which I heartily congratulate you," replied the peer.

"But why do you never come to my soirées, Lord Banterwell? You are such a stranger, that I assure you when you came into my box, I could hardly believe my eyes. I really think that this is the first time you ever entered it."

“And will be the last,” muttered Lord Banterwell, “unless it contains its present magnet;” and he looked admiringly at Clara, who felt vexed at his cool effrontery.

“I hope I shall frequently see you, both here and at my house, my dear lord.”

“You may rely on my being a frequent visitor,” answered his lordship, directing a tender glance at Clara.

“I am now sure that there was not a word of truth in Lady Caroline Cutadash’s statement relative to your reasons for refusing to dine with me, my dear lord.”

“You may be perfectly convinced, madam, though I really do not know what her ladyship said.”

“Only fancy; she asserted that you said you could not dine at my table, ever since you had seen the lions feed at the Zoological Gardens, my tame lions reminded you so much of their voracity”

“*Est-il possible?*” said the peer aloud, and then added, in an under tone, “a true bill, I’m afraid. How absurd! but it is so like Lady Caroline Cutadash’s malice. The fact is, she is dying of envy and jealousy of you; so in fact are all the literary women, and no wonder, you leave them so immeasurably behind. No one writes like you, Mrs. Vincent Robinson.”

“Do you really think so?”

“De Staël herself was but a joke to you.”

“I am delighted that you think so, for no one is a better judge of literature than Lord Banterwell. Indeed, whenever a new book comes out, I always ask what does Lord Banterwell think of it?”

“And whenever I hear of any very clever work appearing anonymously, I say I’ll bet a wager it could be written by no one but Mrs. Vincent Robinson. When Anastasius appeared, I declared at all the clubs that, except for your youthfulness at that time, I could have sworn you were the author; and nothing will ever make me believe that you have not written the two old men’s tales.”

“I assure you——”

“It is useless—I know you deny it; but no one *but you* could have written so well.”

“Many people will insist on it, I confess; in fact, every clever anonymous work is attributed to my pen, and it is in vain that I deny being the author of the productions given to me.”

“ This it is, madam, to have a superior genius lodged in so beautiful a shrine.”

“ No one can turn a compliment like Lord Banterwell.”

“ Or justify one like Mrs. Vincent Robinson.”

“ Apropos of literature, my dear lord, I have often thought, that had I written Madam de Stall’s novels, I would have given a different *day new mint* to many of them.”

“ I am quite sure you would, madam, and that your coinage would have totally changed their currency.”

The ballet now drawing to its close, it occurred to Lord Banterwell that he might be pressed into the service of handing Mrs. Vincent Robinson to her carriage if he staid any longer, and knowing that to be seen by any of the *coteries recherchees* to which he belonged, performing this act of heroic fortitude, would expose him to their ridicule, he was retreating to the door of the box, when its owner caught sight of his figure, and called to him as loudly as she could to come back, and assist her to her carriage. He affected not to hear her, quickened his pace, and glided out, shutting the box door after him.

“ You should have called him, Miss Mordaunt,” said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, “ when you saw that he did not hear me ; my voice is so delicate that I cannot make myself heard except when quite close to those to whom I speak. You must always pay attention to perform similar little services without being told, for I detest being compelled to call, or speak twice. All people of genius are impatient and irritable. You have doubtless heard of the irritability of genius ; but you, and all who like you have not been blessed with this glorious gift, should console yourself that you are exempt from its never failing attendant. Is not that the curtain which has dropped ?”

“ Yes, madam.”

“ And none of those four men to whom I gave tickets have returned to take me to my carriage ! What is to be done ? What an embarrassing position ! Look down, and endeavour to discover if any of them are in the parterre, and if you see them, beckon to them to come.”

Clara blushed at the very notion ; but was saved the necessity of complying with this command, for none of the four poetasters could she discover in the pit. The theatre sent forth its crowds, a vast and dense mass of people ; and now the lights began to be extinguished.

“ Good heavens! how are we to get away?” How stupid it was of you, Miss Mordaunt, not to have told two, at least, of those men, to whom I gave tickets, to return before the ballet was over to take me to the carriage. Go and call the box-keeper, and tell him to look for my servants, and send one up for me to lean on, while the other orders up the carriage as near the entrance as possible.”

Clara opened the door, looked along the lobby, and even ventured a few steps into it, but no box-keeper could she see. She returned to inform Mrs. Vincent Robinson of this, and that lady instantly told her to go in search of him.

“ I really, madam, am afraid to venture alone.”

“ Afraid! and of what, pray? Would you have me be exposed to passing the night here? Oh! there is the last lustre extinguished; go immediately, I command you to go.”

Clara left the box, and timidly advanced along the passage, sickened by the odour of expiring lamps, and the fume of flickering gas lights. Arrived near the entrance to the round room, about which a crowd was still hovering, she shrank back with all a woman's timidity from coming thus alone in close contact with them, and waited a short time, hoping every minute that one of the box-keepers would appear. Again she returned to the box, where Mrs. Vincent Robinson was sitting in total darkness, and reported how unsuccessful had been her search for the box-keeper.

“ Really, Miss Mordaunt, I must say you are very provoking, and of no manner of use to me. I might just as well have no *dam day company* at all. Do you think it is my place to go and look for box-keepers or servants? Go at once, and get through the crush-room as well as you can, until you reach the folding-doors at the top of the stairs, and tell the man you will find there to call my servants.”

With a beating heart, flushed cheeks, and trembling limbs, Clara obeyed the commands of her unfeeling protectress; but how did all these symptoms of emotion become increased when she found herself in the round room, elbowed at every side by fat dowagers and angular misses, to whose proximity, however, she gave a decided preference, rather than venture among the men, who were staring, laughing, and chattering in the centre of the room. As she moved along, adhering to the wall behind the aforesaid ladies, as much as she could, they, on finding some one brush against their garments, turned and

looked at her with no unsuspicious or friendly glances. A young and beautiful girl, totally alone, and stealing, as it were, behind them, excited no favourable impression on their minds; and Clara felt still more abashed and alarmed when she encountered their inquisitorial glances. At length, her progress towards the folding-doors was obstructed by a long sofa placed against the wall, and occupied by some four or five expansive dowagers, whose daughters were ranged in front, holding converse with a group of young men. To break the line Clara felt she dared not do, and so she shrank back towards the wall, at the end of the sofa, screened from view by the ladies, who, unable to find seats, stood chatting together, with their backs turned to her. Here she stood, *with*, but not *of*, the parties around her, her proximity to them compelling her to be an unwilling listener to their conversation.

“Who is that young man talking to my daughter?” asked one old lady of another.

“I’m sure I don’t know; but that good-looking person speaking to mine is the eldest son of Sir Thomas Baskerville, of Suffolk, and heir to ten thousand a-year.”

“Sir Thomas’s fortune is greatly exaggerated, I assure your ladyship, for I know a neighbour of his intimately, who told me it was not above half that amount.”

The last speaker now turned to a lady on the left, and repeated her inquiry as to who was the young man conversing with her daughter. The person questioned raised her glass to her eye, and, after a scrutiny of a moment, replied, that she “was not quite sure whether it was Mr. Clifford or his brother, Mr. Sydney Clifford, as they were so like each other it was difficult to distinguish.”

“Look again, my dear madam, for I am anxious to know.”

“Yes, it is Mr. Clifford, I see it is.”

“He is a very fine-looking young man,” observed the questioner.

“Lady Vernon’s carriage stops the way,” was now loudly called from the staircase, and as loudly repeated by the persons at the folding-doors, yet no one advanced.

“Your carriage is called,” said the lady with the eye-glass to her who had questioned her.

“No matter, let it wait; for I see Anna Maria is listening to something that appears to interest her from Mr. Clifford,

and I dislike interrupting young people when they are enjoying themselves."

The lady with the glass again raised it to her eye, and, looking for a full minute in the direction of the aforesaid Anna Maria, pronounced that "the gentleman she was so attentively listening to was *not* Mr. Clifford, but his younger brother;" adding, "their striking resemblance had deceived her."

No sooner did the other lady hear this, than muttering that *she* saw a great difference between the brothers, she left her place abruptly, and, advancing towards her daughter, seized her arm, and hurried with her towards the door, telling every man she knew to call her carriage; and once more "Lady Temple Vernon's carriage" was echoed through the room. The following dialogue now passed between two ladies who stood near her.

"You have doubtless heard of the rupture between Lord Heaviland and Mrs. Milderton. People talk of nothing else."

"O! yes; how very ridiculous! I heard from an intimate friend of his, that he broke off his engagement because her lap-dog spoilt the varnish of his boots by licking them; and that he gave the lady her choice, either to sacrifice the dog or him, and that she preferred retaining Zoe."

"I do assure you, that you have been misinformed, for I had all the particulars from a most particular friend of Mrs. Milderton, who told me that Pluto, the fine Newfoundland dog that follows Lord Heaviland about, nearly died, in consequence of being almost poisoned by having licked the cheeks of Mrs. Milderton. Pearl-powder and rouge *are* very pernicious things, and there was great difficulty in saving the poor animal. Lord Heaviland told the lady that she must give up distempering her face and his dog; and she declared that *he* was a greater brute than the animal, and so broke off the marriage."

"Mine, I assure you, is the true version of the story."

"Permit me to inform you that, on the contrary, mine is the most correct."

The carriages of both the ladies being called, they quitted their places, and Clara being now left exposed to the gaze of the persons in the centre, and on the other side of the crush-room, from which the expansive figures of the departed ladies had hitherto screened her, she became sensible that many eyes were rudely fixed on her, and growing desperate, she

rapidly, though with trembling steps, advanced towards the door. She had nearly gained it, when she heard her own name loudly pronounced, and, in a moment after, Mr. Hercules Marsden was at her side.

“And so I have at length found you, my little obstinate beauty,” said he, seizing her hand, “and alone, too! How comes it that so pretty a girl is left to take care of herself? Here’s my arm, take it, and don’t make a ridiculous exhibition of yourself and me before all these people.”

Clara called to the man at the folding-door to ask for Mrs. Vincent Robinson’s servants, but her voice was so inaudible from agitation, that it failed to reach his ears. Group after group, retiring from the round room, now hemmed her in, Mr. Hercules Marsden still holding her by the arm, and she vainly endeavouring to make herself heard by the door-keeper, while her tormentor kept addressing her with questions and expostulations, which, being partly overheard by the passers-by, drew on her the rude stare and more rude laugh of many of them.

“And so you have taken the name of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, have you, my pretty trembler? And what has become of your friend Seymour? How does *he* like being thrown over? I can’t say much for the polite attention of *Mr.* Vincent Robinson, however, if there really be such a person, in leaving you to fight your way through such a crowd as this alone.”

Clara writhed in fear and shame, at feeling herself in the grasp of the person on earth whom she most wished to avoid, and in the presence of so many persons who evidently formed the most unfavourable opinion of her, yet every effort to free herself from him would, she felt, be in vain, unless she demanded the protection of some stranger, and this measure she had not courage to take before so many supercilious smilers, who either eyed her askance, or stared impudently in her face. At this moment Mr. Seymour passed close to her, and, wound up to agony, she pronounced his name. He directly advanced to her, and she entreated him to desire the door-keeper to call Mrs. Vincent Robinson’s servant. He obeyed her wishes, and to the loud and repeated calls for that individual, she soon heard a voice reply, yet no one appeared. In a few minutes after the carriage of Mrs. Vincent Robinson was bellowed in stentorian tones, which were re-echoed by the door-keeper.

“Can I be of any use in assisting you to the carriage?” asked Mr. Seymour, with an air of the most distant and reserved politeness; still his manner was polite, and though cold and reserved, respectful, and coming at such a moment, and in contrast with the rude and disgusting familiarity of Mr. Hercules Marsden, it was doubly soothing to her feelings.

“I have left Mrs. Vincent Robinson in her box,” replied Clara, “and without assistance she cannot leave it. I was compelled to seek her servant,” added she, “that he might assist her to her carriage.”

“Let me lead you to her,” said Mr. Seymour, offering his arm, his countenance instantly changing from its reserved character, into a much more soft and kind expression, and his manner assuming its ancient ease.

Clara accepted his arm, and Mr. Seymour having instructed the door-keeper to summon one of Mrs. Vincent Robinson’s servants to that lady’s box, was conducting Clara towards it, when Mr. Hercules Marsden turned to her, and demanded if *he* had not a better right to offer her his services, than the gentleman whose arm she had so readily accepted.

“First come first served, I hold to be the right thing,” said he. “I found you, like a lost sheep, wandering about, and like a careful shepherd I seized you, and would have folded you, when up starts this wolf to seize my lawful property.”

“Mr. Marsden, I request that you will discontinue your troublesome attentions to this lady.”

“And by what right, pray, do you interfere?”

“By the right of every gentleman to protect a woman from insult. Your conduct, in thus persevering to intrude yourself on Miss Mordaunt, contrary to her wishes, is unworthy, unmanly, and I insist on your no farther molesting her.”

“You shall give me satisfaction for this, sir, to-morrow.”

“Whenever you please, sir;” and Mr. Seymour walked away with Miss Mordaunt. They were both silent while they proceeded to Mrs. Vincent Robinson’s box. Clara’s arm trembled within his, and he, conscious that it did so, dared not trust himself to address her. When they reached the box he repented his silence, and would have given much to have again had a similar opportunity of saying a few words to her, but she, interpreting his silence to a total indifference towards her, felt a pang shoot through her heart, that turned her face pale as marble.

“So you are come at last, Miss Mordaunt, are you, after leaving me here heaven only knows how long? Where have you been—what have you been about?”

Clara was so overpowered by her feelings, that she could scarcely articulate, and Mr. Seymour, observing it, said, “I, madam, luckily encountered Miss Mordaunt, with whom I have had the honour of being some time acquainted, in the midst of a very disagreeable crowd, endeavouring to yet your servant called, a very painful and embarrassing position for a young lady. I have endeavoured to be of some use to her, and if, madam, I can be serviceable in assisting you to your carriage, I beg you will accept my arm.”

“You are really very polite, sir; may I beg to know to whom I am indebted for so much civility?”

“My name is Seymour, madam.”

“Any relation to Lord Seymourville?”

“Yes; his cousin.”

“I am exceedingly delighted to make your acquaintance, Mr. Seymour; *my* name is Vincent Robinson, a name well known in the literary and fashionable world. I dare say you have read my works, as, indeed, who has not? My last novel, entitled ‘Love and Passion,’ is considered one of the most extraordinary books that has appeared since Walter Scott’s time.”

All this was uttered in perfect darkness, all the lights of the theatre being extinguished, but so anxious was Mrs. Vincent Robinson to speak on her favourite topics—her books and herself, that she seemed to forget the circumstance.

“I believe, madam, your carriage waits,” said Mr. Seymour, and at the same moment her footman arrived. The lady, assisted by both, and followed by Clara, tottered out of her box, her limbs becoming more than usually feeble from having been so long sitting in a constrained position.

“Notwithstanding that I was justly incensed at Miss Mordaunt’s leaving me such an unaccountable time alone, and in the dark, I do assure you, Mr. Seymour, my time was not lost. I have composed the plan of the most interesting little romance in the world, to be entitled, ‘All in the Dark,’ in which I intend to paint my own emotions under the embarrassing position in which you found me. I mean to describe a gentleman, who had lost a valuable ring in a box near mine, returning to search for it; but in the dark, entering my box by mistake. He gropes on the carpet for his ring, touches my foot

(you have doubtless heard of my foot, which is said to be the smallest and most beautiful in the world), à propos of which a certain illustrious duke said, it was a contradiction, being at once the *least* and *most* in the world, meaning the least in size, and the most beautiful in shape. Was n't it very clever? but he is such a clever dear creature!"

At this moment the party reached the round room, where lights were still burning, and a few old ladies and middle-aged spinsters were waiting to hear their carriages announced, while their footmen were indulging in protracted potations in the Haymarket, forgetful of every thing but the liquid fire they were imbibing. Involuntarily Seymour turned round to gaze on the lady whom he was supporting on his arm, and whose pretensions to juvenility had so much astonished, if not amused him; and he nearly started with surprise on beholding her. Her dress, always *outré*, had now become more so, by her having indulged in a *siesta* in her box, the consequences of which were but too visible in her flattened turban, wig awry, the loss of one eyebrow, and the undue altitude of the other; the rouge totally rubbed off one cheek by its friction against the side of the box, and the glaring red of its fellow.

"You will, you *must* come and visit me, Mr. Seymour. You will meet at my house all the distinguished *literati* of the day, with a sprinkling of the *élite* of the fashionables. You will hear Miss Mordaunt sing my songs,—a great treat, I promise you, for I have engaged her to set them to music. By the by, I am now writing a charming little song, as a companion to that by Haynes Bayley, entitled 'I would be a butterfly,'—mine, I have called 'I would be a sparrow, for a sparrow is a much more poetical subject than a butterfly. Don't you agree with me?"

The few persons whom Mr. Seymour encountered in the crush-room, and on the stairs, smiled and shrugged their shoulders as they eyed Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and examined him with an air of astonishment, that any man so *comme il faut* should be taken in to become her escort; but when they glanced at the lovely girl that was following her, the enigma seemed solved, and they shook their heads with a most sapient air of self-complacency at their own powers of perception. When Mr. Seymour had assisted Mrs. Vincent Robinson into her carriage, he performed the same service for Clara, and

while doing so, in a low voice, expressed his hope that she was less uncomfortable at present than at Mrs. Williamson's. This was done with an air of such deep interest, that it soothed the wound inflicted on her feelings by his prior coldness, and she wished, though she scarcely indulged a hope, that he would call at her new abode. Yet a moment's reflection convinced her of the folly of this wish, and made her acknowledge that, situated as they were, the less they saw of each other the better.

Mrs. Vincent Robinson, in the excitement of having made a new acquaintance, and, as she fancied, achieved a new conquest, had nearly forgotten to reprehend her companion; but when she had exhausted every term of approval of Mr. Seymour's person and manners, she reminded Clara of the impropriety of having left her alone, and in darkness too, in her box for so long a period.

"Pray, explain the cause of this, Miss Mordaunt? for I was not only in the dark *then*, but I am still so on this subject. Really I turned that point very happily. I wish you would remember to make a note of it. You should note down the *bone mos* I utter in the course of the day, Miss Mordaunt, just as Boswell wrote those of Johnson. But, to return to what I was saying; what kept you so long away?"

"I really, madam, had not courage to enter such a crowd alone."

"How very odd! You must get over such misplaced *go-cherry*; *dams day company* have no business to give way to such folly, and I trust I shall not have to complain of it again."

Glad was Clara to find herself in the solitude of her own chamber once more. It had acquired an air of much more comfort since she had left it on dressing for dinner; and a *petit souper* neatly arranged enabled her to satisfy the cravings of hunger. Two or three additional articles of furniture had been brought into the room, and judiciously placed, and she felt grateful to her hostess for this kindness,—a kindness she was far from anticipating. Solitude and privacy, always so desirable to, and valued by, persons with minds given to reflection, are doubly estimated by those in dependent situations. The periods passed in their chambers by women so placed are the happiest they know, for then and then only do they feel the luxury of calling a few brief hours their own,

free from the interruption of commanded services, or automaton-like silence; *dames de compagnie* and governesses being generally looked upon as wholly the creatures of their employers, who are not only to live and act according to their pleasure, but positively to render up their volition, speech, and thoughts to their sovereign will. As Clara looked round in the little clean quiet room allotted to her, she reflected that here every night at least she might hope to enjoy a few calm hours, and she felt grateful even for this anticipated blessing. She was on the point of retiring to her couch, when a gentle tap at the door was followed by the presence of Victorine, who came to offer her services to disrobe her.

“Pray, mademoiselle, permit me to assist at your toilette whenever I can get away from madame—it will give me much *plaisir*. I did have some few *meubles* put in here, to make you more comfortable; and when you want any ting, I hope you say so to me. I know you have eat no dinner, le maître d’hôtel did tell me so. Madame is so droll, she let no one do what he like; it must be only what *she* like; so you starve if you not eat a leetle bit of someting in your own room. Madame is one *égoïste*, one hard heart, but I see you not like me to say so. *Eh bien!* you find dat out very soon; I not say no more, but I do wish to make you as *confortable* in dis house as I can, and so alway do tell me what is you want. I do like you, Mademoiselle, for you show good for dat *pauvre cher petit ange*, dat I lofe vid all my heart. She is *malheureuse*, *bien malheureuse*, *cher enfant*. Dat old dame not like her not at all, but do take her in her house to get praised, and all de people to whom she give de *cadeaux* do say ‘how good madame is to take dat little child.’ *It is angelique.* ‘*O! it is charmant,*’ and so they go on; and she before de company *fait semblant* to lofe de *cher enfant*; but when de be all gone, she say, go away, you are troublesome child, go away. *Eh bien!* I will not say no more, except to tell you, dat I did get one very good *chirurgien* to come here when you was gone to de opera, and he look at de poor *petite jambe* of dat *cher enfant*, and he did think it was right to cut de piece away, and he did vish it had been done de day dat de vicked dog did bite her; and the *cher petit ange* did not cry out, nor show de leetle bad temper vile he did cut, cut, but de tears did come into her eyes, and her leetle face did turn as pale as a *fleur-de-lys*, and ven it vas all done

she did faint away on her pillow. He did give to her a composing drink, and she soon fell asleep, and she has never awakened since. My mind be much more easy *depuis*, and I do hope dat *cher enfant* will be soon well again. Bonsoir, Mademoiselle, dormez bien,—bon soir."

At an early hour next day, Mrs. Vincent Robinson sent to say that she wished to see Miss Mordaunt; and when Clara had obeyed the summons, she found that lady in her bed, the curtains of which were so closely drawn, that it was only through a narrow opening that she could discover the befrilled and beflounced mummy within.

"I sent for you, Miss Mordaunt, to say that, as I am to have a party this evening, and expect you to sing my song, I wish you to swallow three or four raw eggs, which are excellent for the voice."

"I really, madam, hope you will not exact this, as I feel a peculiar disgust to raw eggs."

"Stuff! nonsense! how childish to give way to such fancies! When people receive a liberal stipend, they ought to adopt the advice of their employers, and cheerfully endeavour to please them."

"I do assure you, madam, that I have every wish to do so."

"That may be, Miss Mordaunt; but permit me to observe, that hitherto I have not had any reason to think so."

"I am sorry, madam."

"Well then, if you *are* sorry, why not obey my wishes? Victorine, bring three raw eggs for Miss Mordaunt."

"Faites semblant de les avaler," said Victorine in a low voice. "Elle a la vue si basse, qu'elle ne verrait pas si vous prenez les œufs ou non."

Clara followed the advice of the *femme de chambre*, and Mrs. Vincent Robinson was satisfied.

"Now," resumed that lady, "go practice my song until you are quite perfect in it; and eat as little as possible, that your voice may be flexible for the evening. Victorine, order some milk beat up with the yoke of eggs, and sugar, with two or three slices of very thin bread, and clarified honey, for Miss Mordaunt's breakfast; mind, not more than three *very* thin slices; and now, I shall try and sleep until noon, that I may gain strength to get through the fatigues of the evening."

Clara having sung the required song twice over, was surprised to see a copious and luxurious breakfast set before

her. She almost doubted the propriety of partaking it, as so open an infringement of the orders of the owner of the mansion appeared to her to be incorrect; but Victorine, who entered to see that *mademoiselle* was what she called *confortable*, vanquished her scruples, by telling her that it was only by making a good breakfast, that she could support the insufficient dinner to which the whimsical caprices of Mrs. Vincent Robinson obliged her *dame de compagnie* to submit.

“De poor young lady dat did go away did destroy her healt by starving herself to please madame, and she hoped *Mademoiselle Moredent* would not do de same. De house-keeper is one good person, who do wish to do right to every body, and *madame* will never know dat *mademoiselle* do eat enough to keep herself alive or not.”

The morning repast being concluded, Clara sought Ada Myrrha, who was reclined on a sofa, with her little leg bandaged. The interesting child welcomed her with delight; and after Clara had examined her in her studies, she was surprised as well as gratified to discover that the little girl was much more advanced than she expected to find her.

“I shall be so glad to have lessons to learn again,” she said; “won’t you teach me, dear Miss Mordaunt? My own good mamma, that is gone to Heaven, used to teach me every day, and when I had learnt all my lessons, it was so pleasant to play in the garden, or dress my doll; but ever since I came here, I have no lessons to learn, except whenever Ma’m selle Victorine teaches me French, and it is so dull to have nothing to do but tie up flowers all day, and no garden to play in, and no doll to dress.”

“And so Ma’m selle Victorine has taught you French?”

“O! yes, I know almost every thing that is said; and very often I wish I did not, for when I hear Ma’m selle Victorine say *such* things of *somebody*, I am sorry; for mamma, who is in Heaven, said I must be grateful to *somebody*, for offering to take me when *she* would be gone for ever; and I don’t like to hear Ma’m selle Victorine call her *vieille folle*; but don’t tell *somebody*, for Ma’m selle Victorine is so good and kind to me, that I would not get her scolded for all the world. But isn’t it naughty, Miss Mordaunt, for me to hear Ma’m selle Victorine call *somebody* names? but indeed, I can’t help it, for I could not bear to hear Mam’selle Victorine scolded.”

The fine moral sense evinced by this child charmed Clara,

and made her doubly anxious to bestow every possible care and attention in cultivating a mind that promised to bear such precious fruit.

“ I will represent to Victorine the impropriety of speaking disrespectfully of her mistress, my dear little girl; and I am gratified that you have so just a sense of what is right, as to have felt the error of which she was guilty. Gratitude, my dear Ada Myrrha, to all from whom we receive services, is indispensable. It is often the sole means of acknowledging our sense of them, and should never be effaced from our minds.”

“ Do not call me Ada Myrrha, dear Miss Mordaunt. I always think people do not love me who call me so. Nobody does so, but those disagreeable people who make verses on *somebody*; I don't like people who make verses; do you?”

“ You must not give way to prejudices, my dear, for some of the best and wisest people have written verses.”

“ Well, I will try and not dislike them, if you tell me not; but, indeed, they are very disagreeable, for they say *such* things. They say *somebody* is so beautiful, and so good, that she is an angel; and then they say quite low, so that she can't hear them, what a vain foolish old woman she is, and that I am a stupid child. Isn't that wicked of them, Miss Mordaunt? That's why I don't like people who make verses, for I thought they were all the same, all wicked. But won't you always call me Mary? Do, pray, dear Miss Mordaunt, when *somebody* is not by, for then I will think you love me, and it will make me love you too, for my own dear mamma used to call me Mary, and sometimes my dear Mary, and my sweet Mary, and my own Mary. O! how pleasant her voice used to sound in my ears, when she called me so. *She* loved me, and so did a great many people then; but now no one loves me but Victorine. And though Victorine is very kind, she speaks loud, and laughs loud, and is not a bit like my dear mamma that is gone to Heaven.”

Clara was in the midst of her lessons with her little pupil, a task from which she already anticipated no little satisfaction, whilst the child, on her side, seemed delighted, and exhibited an unusual facility in acquiring what was taught her, when a message from Mrs. Vincent Robinson to attend her interrupted her more agreeable occupation.

“ I sent for you, Miss Mordaunt, that you might amuse me while I breakfast,—it assists digestion, and prevents my eat-

ing too fast. Do begin, and tell me something agreeable or interesting."

The command precluded the power of obeying it, and reminded Clara of the observation of Madame de Maintenon on the irksomeness of endeavouring to *amuse* those who were not *amusable*.

"Well, Miss Mordaunt, I am waiting; why don't you begin."

"Really, madam, I hardly know how to fulfil your injunctions."

"How tiresome! my buttered cake will get cold—my *filet de volaille* hard—and my chocolate thick, while you are thinking what to say to amuse me. I wonder when people offer themselves as *dams de company*, that they do not prepare themselves for what they are expected to do!"

"I am very sorry, madam——"

"Do you know, Miss Mordaunt, that you have a habit of saying, 'really, madam,' and 'I am very sorry, madam.' Do get rid of it, for I can't bear the repetition of the same words. People of genius never can; our nerves are so susceptible, our organization so wholly different from that of persons of the ordinary stamp like yourself, that we are seldom understood, and people go on treating us as they would persons like themselves. Have you yet thought of any thing to amuse me?"

"No, madam."

"Well, then, suppose you tell me your history—the misfortunes of your father; the troubles they entailed on you; the vexations and humiliations, and all that sort of thing; it may amuse me, and even if it should not, some of the incidents may furnish me with subjects for my novels. But mind you make the history as touching as possible, otherwise it won't amuse me a bit. I hope you have met with the most serious misfortunes and trials, for the recital of such events by the persons who have endured them is very *piquant* and amusing."

A servant at this moment entered, and saved Clara from the necessity of informing the unfeeling Mrs. Vincent Robinson that she had not yet acquired sufficient stoicism to make her misfortunes and trials a topic of conversation.

"A gentleman has sent up this card for Miss Mordaunt," said the servant, holding out a silver salver, on which was the card of Mr. Hercules Marsden.

"Pray, who is this person?" demanded Mrs. Vincent Robinson, with an air of extreme hauteur.

"A gentleman, madam, whom I would on no account receive."

"If it be Mr. Seymour, who was so useful to me last evening, and who I requested to call here, admit him instantly."

"It is not, madam,"

"Who then is it?"

"A Mr. Marsden, who I must decline seeing; and, with your permission, madam, I will request that no male visitor, except my aged friend, Mr. Abraham Jacob, be admitted."

"And pray *why* do you object to see this Mr. Marsden?"

Clara felt embarrassed at being thus rudely questioned in the presence of a domestic, and her obtuse hostess observed it; but, ignorant of the cause of the embarrassment, she attributed it to some love-affair, such being, in her weak and ill-regulated mind, the source of all emotions.

"Mr. Marsden, madam, is a person whose acquaintance I disapprove."

"Ho! ho!" thought her hostess, "I was right."

"Admit Mr. Marsden," said she; "for probably he will do what I have been asking you to effect for this last half hour—he may amuse me."

"Really, madam, I must——"

"Again you are at your 'really, madam!' I wish, Miss Mordaunt, you would pay more attention to my wishes, for it is very trying to a delicate organization like mine to be——"

Here the servant threw the door open, and announced "Mr. Hercules Marsden."

"And so at last you have admitted me, my pretty little pickaninny, after keeping me kicking my heels about in the hall among a pack of staring servants for the last ten minutes."

"It was not *I*, but this lady, the mistress of the house, who ordered you to be admitted, for I declined to see you," said Clara, with a *fierté* that might have cooled the courage of any less unceremonious person than him to whom her reply was addressed.

"And this is Mrs. Robinson Crusoe, or Crusoe Robinson, for hang me if I remember which. Well, how do you do, old lady? A devilish good breakfast you have there! It makes me hungry to look at it, and so, with your leave, I will fall to."

And so saying, he drew a chair to the table, and, *sans cérémonie*, to the no little surprise of the lady of the house, helped

himself to a portion of the *filet de volaille*, and began devouring it."

"Devilish good cook yours is, I can tell you, ma'am! What have you got to drink? O! chocolate, I see. I don't like it after the fowl, so, if you have no objection, I will ring for some Madeira;" and he did ring, and loudly too, and when the bell was answered, told the servant to bring him a bottle of the *old particular*. "Mind, the old particular, you sir, for I am a good judge."

Mrs. Vincent Robinson sat in a state of such astonishment, mingled with alarm, that Clara felt pity for her, notwithstanding this annoyance was brought on by her own folly. She, therefore, reminded Mr. Hercules Marsden that he was taking very unwarrantable liberties in the house of a lady whom he had never previously seen, and in which he was an uninvited guest.

"Not over civil of you to tell me so, however," was his answer. "The house is not yours, and Mrs. Robinson Crusoe finds no fault, and if she did, she has a tongue to speak, I suppose. I see no right in you to act as mistress of the ceremonies."

The Madeira was now brought, to which Mr. Hercules Marsden helped himself; and putting his hand in his pocket, drew from it a sovereign, which he threw on the silver salver in the servant's hand, saying, "that's for you, sir."

The servant looked astonished, and doubtful; then offered to return the money, but Mr. Marsden told him to "pocket the coin and be off."

"I say, Mrs. Robinson Crusoe, your wine-merchant is not as good as your cook! His Madeira never crossed the line, I can tell you, or if it did it was shipwrecked, and half drowned, for I'll be —— if it is not the weakest stuff that ever was misnamed wine. But women never know the difference between one wine and another, and the rascally wine-merchants, who are aware of this fact, supply them only with what their male customers would reject."

"Miss Mordaunt, your acquaintance seems to make himself so perfectly at ease in my house, that I almost begin to suspect he imagines himself to be the owner. He seems to like my room, I think."

"Much better than your company, I can assure you, old girl, for a rummer concern than your precious self I never saw in all my born days."

"You are polite, sir," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, becoming crimson with anger.

"You mean to say just the contrary, Mrs. Robinson Crusoe; for when a man tells an old or ugly woman the truth in London, he is instantly called impolite."

"May I request the favour of your absence, sir?"

"Faith! you have anticipated me, for I was just going to ask the favour of your's, old girl, as I want to have some private conversation with this young lady."

"I must positively decline having any conversation with you, sir," replied Clara.

"Why you never can be such a fool as to persevere in rejecting my proposal, Miss Mordaunt—what have you to hope or expect? For though Seymour did give you his arm last night at the opera, he did so very unwillingly, and only through shame when you called him. He has given up all thoughts of you, if he ever had any, which I doubt; and as I am young, rich, and generous, what more can you desire?"

At the words rich and generous, Mrs. Vincent Robinson pricked up her ears, for she had an unbounded respect for wealth, and greatly admired generosity, when not required to be exercised in her own person.

"Why truly, Miss Mordaunt, this gentleman speaks very fairly; and though his conduct here has been a little extraordinary, and somewhat unceremonious, still, taking your situation into account, I think you ought to reflect before you refuse his offers."

"Right, old girl, you are no fool, I see; and I'll tell you what, if you can talk this pretty but obstinate girl into accepting my proposal, hang me if I won't come down handsomely with the ready money, for I'll give you a couple of cool hundreds for yourself."

"My fortune, sir, precludes any interested motives; but as far as a ring, a *Séviigné*, or any *bagatelle* of that kind, as a wedding gift, I certainly should not refuse it, on account of my respect for Miss Mordaunt."

"A wedding gift, indeed—whew!" said Mr. Marsden, winding up his repetition of Mrs. Vincent Robinson's words by a sound resembling a whistle. "Why, who the devil spoke of a wedding?"

"Let me entreat you, madam, not to permit yourself and me to be any longer insulted by this person—gentleman, his

conduct prevents me from calling him. Presuming on my dependent position, he dared to insult me before with the most dishonourable proposals, and experienced the contempt to which his conduct entitled him. I should have refused to accept the most honourable offer he could make ; but his persistence in insult merits a severity of chastisement proportioned to its baseness."

Clara's cheeks glowed, and her eyes sparkled with indignation, as she uttered this reproof.

"Well, if you are not a Tartar, I never saw one. Ay, and a fool into the bargain. Why, would it not be a million times more to your advantage to accept my proposal, than to stay here with this old painted jezebel?"

"With your permission, madam, I will ring the bell, that one of your servants may conduct this person to the door," said Clara, seeing that Mrs. Vincent Robinson was so surprised and confounded by the impudence and rudeness of Mr. Hercules Marsden, that she was incapable of exertion.

"Certainly, Miss Mordaunt, ring the bell, I will have all my servants up to expel this dreadful man."

"Why, one glance at your gorgon face, you old *harridan*, would be sufficient to frighten away any man in the world from your presence," and so saying Mr. Hercules Marsden rose and left the room, casting a glance of undisguised rage at Clara.

"O dear ! what a terrible creature !—Well, I never !—do pray give me my salts—I fear I am going to faint ;—some Hungary water for my temples—a little *sal volatile* in water might do me good." All these remedies were supplied, and having alternately availed herself of them, Mrs. Vincent Robinson burst into a fit of hysterical weeping. "Oh ! oh ! how dreadful !—He called me a gorgon—*me*, Miss Mordaunt, a gorgon !—who could believe that there was such wickedness in this world. Oh ! oh ! what would the world say if this was known ?—*me*, who have been counted a beauty all my life. O ! the vile horrid wretch—if he had said any thing else in the world I should not have been so much surprised ; but this wickedness—could you have believed there was any thing like it in the world, Miss Mordaunt ?"

"I could believe anything of that odious man, madam," replied Clara, really pitying the poor infatuated old woman before her, who was weeping in all the helplessness of childish imbecility.

Surrounded by flatterers, some actuated by interested motives, and others by the desire of rendering her still more amusingly ridiculous, Mrs. Vincent Robinson had never heard aught resembling truth relative to her personal or mental qualifications, since her early youth. She had for the last forty years lived in a state of complete illusion, believing herself, in spite of the truth revealed by her mirror, a beauty; and notwithstanding the stern criticisms of the press on her novels, a *femme d'esprit*. No wonder, then, that the abrupt and brutal avowal of Mr. Hercules Marsden entering ears, accustomed only to the dulcet sounds of flattery, shocked and wounded her, and as Clara marked the extent to which the poor vain old woman's vanity was hurt, and by a person with whom she would, in all human probability, never have come in contact had it not been for her own entrance into the mansion in Grosvenor-square, she the more anxiously sought, by every means in her power, to soothe her irritated feelings. Having wept herself into a state of comparative composure, the ruling passion strong even under the infliction of severe annoyance, still betrayed itself in Mrs. Vincent Robinson.

"Oh! Miss Mordaunt," said she, "what a capital subject for a novel was the fearful scene of this day. Here were you, an admirable heroine, your virtue assailed by a monster, pursuing you from place to place—and I, with matronly dignity, but with all the helplessness of feminine delicacy, standing forth to shield you,—supporting the violent insults of the monster, because I would not yield you up to his barbarous tyranny. Do, I intreat you, make notes of the scene; I will write a novel on the subject, to be entitled 'The Guardian Angel; or, Virtue Triumphant.' I will have it illustrated by one of the best artists, and will select for one of the plates, the moment when you rose from your chair with glowing cheeks and sparkling eyes, to ring the bell to have that monster expelled, and while I, pale as monumental marble, my cheek leaning on my hand, and my hair floating on my shoulders, incapable of speech, waved my other hand to encourage you. That fearful wretch shall be drawn like some demon, menacing us both. I will have the face copied from Lawrence's Satan. Ada Myrrha shall be clinging to my knees for protection, and three white doves, emblems of innocence, shall be painted, hovering over each of our heads, with a vampire and bat poised over his. It is a wonderful, a sublime conception,

and cannot fail, when carried into execution, to make the greatest sensation ever known since the days of Scott, whose place, I think I may without vanity assert, I fill up in the literary world. I see you are surprised, Miss Mordaunt, at my strength of mind, to have so soon recovered the shock occasioned by that terrible monster. But this is true philosophy. I extract good even from what is baneful. The tenderness of my woman's heart yielded to the first shock, but the strength of my powerful understanding repelled the blow, and led me instantly to perceive the glorious subject offered to me to add to my laurels, by taking this assault for a subject to write on. I beg you will instantly make the notes; you may, if you like it, and it would be a graceful way of acknowledging your great obligations to me, write a description of me; and now I will go to bed, that the traces of tears may be effaced from my eyes by sleep, as I have got a charming dress, and wish to look *myself* at my party this evening. Give me your arm to assist me to my chamber, Miss Mordaunt; I don't wish Victorine to see me until I have bathed my eyes with rose water. Lady's maids are so inquisitive, and so unfeeling, that great writers, like myself, must not let them see us under trying circumstances. I think it was Milton who said that no man was a hero to his *valet de chambre*, but I think I may say that I am a heroine to my *fam de chambre*. Don't you think so?"

Clara having assisted Mrs. Vincent Robinson to her apartment, and placed her on her *lit de repos*, was leaving the room to send her maid to that lady, when she called her back.

"As I shall remain here, and only take a few light restoratives to enable me to get through the fatigue of the evening, you will not, I dare say, object to not having any dinner, Miss Mordaunt, and oblige me, by swallowing a few raw eggs instead, that my song may go off with more *éclat*; and now *adio, cara!* Don't I speak Italian beautifully? *adio!*"

Though in a measure prepared for some ridiculous exhibition on the part of Mrs. Vincent Robinson on the occasion of this *soirée*, the one that awaited her in the drawing-room astonished Clara. A profusion of flowers and lights rendered the atmosphere of the salon so heavy and overcoming, that though in perfect health, Clara found it difficult to respire freely in it. A small portable bed, with lace curtains, lined with *couleur de rose*, the drapery held in the mouth of an or-molu dove, first attracted her attention. Over this fanciful little bed leant

the lady of the house, with a flowing veil of lace falling down from the braided tresses of her wig, her forehead bound by a diamond bandeau, and a Psyche fly, of the same precious materials, over her brow; a robe of white tulle, worn over satin of the same snowy hue, fell in folds to her feet, and was confined at the waist by a *ceinture* of brilliants. Her arms and wrists were encircled by diamonds, and their withered and bony appearance, looking like those of a dried skeleton, whitened with pearl powder, formed a shocking and grotesque contrast with the glittering gems that were around them.

As Clara looked on Mrs. Vincent Robinson, the veil falling down and nearly concealing the face, she was reminded of the description given of Inez de Castro, when, disinhumed from the tomb and decked in jewels, the poor corse was placed, by the commands of her morbidly sensitive husband, to receive in state the recognition and homage denied her when living. A gilt lyre was on a stand by the side of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and an album, bound in violet-coloured velvet enriched with precious stones, with a pen and ink-stand to correspond, were placed beside it. Clara could not comprehend the meaning of this *tableau*, but she was not long left in ignorance of its signification.

“Look here, Miss Mordaunt, how picturesquely I have arranged all this—*n'est pas*?—it has quite a scenic effect?”

Clara approached, and beheld poor little Ada Myrrha reclining on the bed, her head wreathed with rose buds and poppies, and bouquets of the same flowers strewed over the lace *couvrepiéd* that shaded her person. The beautiful child's delicate cheeks had a colour brighter than health ever wore; her eyes were heavy and languid, and her long black eyelashes threw their shadow over her cheeks, giving to them so dark a reflection that the whole expression of her countenance was changed, and presented something unearthly. Clara was forcibly struck with the scene, and, gazing from Mrs. Vincent Robinson to the child, could not forbear remembering the fairy tales perused in her infancy, and almost fancied that the latter was some young and lovely being, suffering under the spells of the old enchantress, who bent over her, uttering incantations, and breathing death.

“I see you are surprised and delighted,” said Mrs. Vincent Robinson, “as well you may be. Have I not beautifully arranged it? I particularly ordered that you should know

nothing of my scheme until it was carried into execution, that I might judge of the brilliant effect it will produce on others, by that operated on you,

Clara touched Ada Myrrha's hand, which lay listlessly on the lace counterpane, and found it parched and burning. "The dear child is seriously unwell, I fear, madam," said she.

"O! dear no, not at all."

"Her hand burns, and her whole appearance indicates suffering. Are you ill, my dear?" asked Clara.

The little girl opened her eyes languidly, and, looking at Clara, murmured, "I knew it was you who touched my hand, though I was asleep; your hand always feels so nice, and soft, and cool."

"You see she is not at all ill, Miss Mordaunt, and pray do not put such fancies into the child's head."

"I fear, madam, that the heat and closeness of the atmosphere, and the quantity of flowers in the apartment, and on her bed, have produced the feverish flushing of the face, and burning of the hands that I observe."

"I can discern no such symptoms, Miss Mordaunt, so I beg you will say no more on the subject. I am convinced that it was Victorine who put all this nonsense into your head, for she bored me about it all the time she was dressing me."

"I do assure you, madam, I have not seen Victorine for some hours, nor heard that the child was suffering any thing more than from the bite in her leg."

The sound of carriage wheels, and the reverberation of loud knocks at the door, interrupted further remonstrance on the part of Clara, and Mrs Vincent Robinson resumed her theatrical attitude by the bed of the child. The folding-doors were thrown open by the groom of the chambers, who, knowing the deafness of his mistress, loudly announced the names of the entering guests—"Mrs. Belinda Figgins," "Miss Adelaide Courtney Biggs," "Miss Sophia Wilhelmina Macpherson," and "Mr. O'Shoughnessey."

"Silence! not a word!" uttered Mrs. Belinda Figgins. "What a picture! How exquisite! See our muse, our Sappho, neglectful of her lyre, (that lyre whose strains have won her immortal fame,) bending over that cherub. Never did my eyes behold so enchanting a *tableau*."

"Divine!" exclaimed Miss Adelaide Courtney Biggs; "she looks like the apotheosis of poetry shielding purity."

“A fine bold image, and I’ll make use of it in my next poem,” murmured Miss Sophia Wilhelmina Macpherson.

“They won’t let a body get a word in, but for the soul of me, I can’t see the sinse of a hypothesis of *poethry* shielding purity. Sure, a hypothesis is at best but a doubtful thing,” said Mr. O’Shoughnessey.

“O! my sweet friend!” “My angelic benefactress!”—
“My generous patroness!” exclaimed the three ladies alternately.

“Be me honour and soul! they won’t lave me a word to say to the ould lady. They exhaust every term of flattery. Well, sure and I have one resource left to me, and that is to pretend to be in love with the ould crathur, for I see she’d swallow any thing in the way of blarney; so, faith! and its myself that will begin from this very night to turn up my eyes, and heave sighs, until I make her believe that its dying I am for her; and who knows, if I play my cards well, but I may yet become the masther of this house; stranger things have come to pass; and if ever this happens, be me soul, Mrs. Belinda Figgins, Adelaide Courtney Biggs, and Sophia Wilhelmina Macpherson, ye’ll never see the inside of this house as long as ye live, or get ye’r legs under the mahogany, I can tell ye. And afther all, faith! the ould girl would have no bad catch in me. Aint I as fine a young fellow as she could clap her eyes on?”

Whilst the three ladies remained at one end of the room, expressing, *sotto voce*, their ecstacies at the *tableau* presented by Mrs. Vincent Robinson, Mr. O’Shoughnessey walked up on tip-toe to that lady, and gazing at her with a look of impassioned fondness, and heaving a deep sigh, hoped *her* child was not *sariously* ill. “Sure, under the sun, no, nor by lamp-light either, there is not a more beautiful sight, ma’am, than a lovely mother and her child, especially when, as in the present case, the child is the living picture of the mother.”

Mrs. Vincent Robinson positively smiled with pleasure at the young Hibernian, delighted to be supposed young enough to be the mother of Ada Myrrha.

“I suppose this angel in sheets,” pointing to the child, “isn’t the youngest of your babes; I’ll be bound you have a duodecimo miniature of yourself in the nursery, and happy is the man the darlings call dada.” (1)

(1) Dada is used in Ireland instead of papa.

Again Mrs. Vincent Robinson smiled, and still more complacently, on O'Shoughnessey.

"You are in error," replied she, "I have no children, no husband."

"O! is it possible? But no, 'tis *not* possible: sure, none with the hearts of men in their breasts would let such a beautiful creature say she has 'no children, no husband.' Don't, for God's sake, repate that again, for I can't answer for myself."

"Mr. O'Shonosy, you really are very unaccountable, very impetuous."

"Faith! and ye may say that, ye beauty of the world; but sure 'tis not my fault, I did not make myself, did I? And if such a woman is thrown in a man's way, and he hears her say, 'I have no children, no husband,' is n't it enough to drive him out of his senses? I wish I never heard them words; for as long as I believed you had a husband, and young babies, my passion kept within bounds; but *now* I'm stark staring mad with love, and ye'll have my life to answer for if you don't take pity on me, that's what ye will."

"How very odd! Did none of the ladies with whom you first came here inform you that I was a widow, and childless?"

"Arragh is it them! faith, they'd be devilish sorry to do that same."

"And why so, pray?"

"Why? you innocent beauty of the world! aren't the whole three of 'em dying for love of me? and do ye think they'd be such fools as to let me know that the only woman on the face of the earth that I ever pronounced to be perfect, was single, and free to receive my tender vows, if she wished it."

The arrival of more guests reminded the mistress of the mansion that, however pleasant to her feelings, she must not permit Mr. O'Shoughnessey to engross her any longer; but she intimated this to him with so much gentleness, that he acquiesced in the sad necessity of her devoting a portion of her time to her other guests.

"Promise me, before we part, that ye will let me come and see ye to-morrow, that I may tell ye the sleepless nights and miserable days I have passed since I first clapped me eyes on that lovely face of yours."

"You really embarrass me, Mr. O'Shonosy, I—I——"

"Arragh! don't say any thing to drive me entirely to dis—"

traction; ye don't know the consequence.—Just say ye'll see me alone to-morrow, and I'll be as quiet as a lamb."

"Well, though I believe I am acting very foolishly, very indiscreetly, I—I *will* see you to-morrow, at two o'clock; but remember, I only consent to this, on condition that you do not embarrass me before my visitors this evening; and that you do not consider me *very* indiscreet. *Adio!*"

"A *jew*, you charmer! Cleopatra sailing down the Cydnus, or Dido herself, was but a joke to you!—Well, but there's nothing in this world that a woman would not believe, and especially an ould one.—Indiscreet, indeed, ye ould fool; faith, though ye'r come to the years of discretion many a long year ago, the discretion has not come to *you* yet; and it's my opinion, that you'll be Mrs. O'Shoughnessey before ye'r much oulder, for you recaive my courting better than I expected, any way.—O, Denis O'Shoughnessey!—Denis O'Shoughnessey! you're the boy for bothering the hearts of the women, ould or young, I'll say that for ye."

Lady Clorinda Beverly and Miss Winthorpe, Sir Augustus and Lady Mellicent, Miss Timmins, Mrs. Smith Brown, and—oh! what a climax!—"His Majesty the King of Oude," were successively announced. A smile, and a few gracious words, were addressed to each by the mistress of the mansion; but no sooner did his majesty of Oude enter, than she approached him, and, in a style of florid but insipid compliment, expressed her delight at his presence.

"How does your majesty like England?"

"Very well, madam."

"I do not ask how your majesty likes English ladies."

"I have seen several very handsome young ladies since I have been in London, madam."

"How dreadful is that custom in your majesty's country of permitting a plurality of wives."

"You ladies would probably prefer a plurality of husbands."

"O! how shocking! really your majesty is too severe on us women, and I ought to be angry."

"What for angry, madam? the old ladies not of course wish husbands, only the young; *you* old, and not cause to be vex."

A titter from Lady Clorinda Beverly and Miss Winthorpe apprised the rest of the company that something amusing was going on, in which they were very desirous to participate; but the attention of all present was now directed to a group who

entered the salon. One of the new arrivals appeared in a dress of a native of Kamschatska, another was habited in a Hungarian costume, while a third assumed that of a Greek. The curiosity excited by this group, and the uncereimoniousness with which it was gratified, at least as far as a system of rude staring could go, seemed to astonish his majesty of Oude.

"I see your majesty is surprised at beholding assembled in one room the costumes of so many different countries," observed Mrs. Vincent Robinson, with that smile which never left her lips when intending to enact *the aimable* to any lion of the day.

"No, madam, I am not never surprise at any thing in this very surprising *contrey*, from de Tames Tunnel to dis route."

"How very clever! quite a wit!" said the lady, turning to Miss Adelaide Courtney Biggs, who stood behind her.

"But you not know de language of dese different strangers, dey perhaps not know yours; what for you ask dem to come here?" demanded the King of Oude.

"O dear! your majesty is mistaken;—the gentlemen in the different costumes are all Englishmen."

"All Englishmen! how very strange! what for de come in masquerade?"

"To oblige me, your majesty."

"O! it oblige you, madam, to see all de people look surpris, and laugh too, at dese poor silly Englishmen, who come in masquerade before der countrymen. Dat is wicked, madam. If all de company do come in masquerade, den no one laugh at de oders; den it is not wicked."

"But, your majesty, these gentlemen like to show their dresses, and to be talked about."

"What for not send deir dresses to be look at? dat would be better."

"The variety of costumes gives a more brilliant effect to the room, your majesty."

"O den dat is why you ask me. Ah, madam! me find you out. One friend, much travelled, tell me de English ladies like de kings, de princes, and de fine costumes, I see him tell truth. De man is not what de do consider, but de title, and de dress."

Not knowing how to parry this observation, Mrs. Vincent Robinson resorted to the old and safe plan of not noticing it, and transferred to Lady Clorinda Beverly the task of entertaining her distinguished guest.

“That, your majesty,” said Lady Clorinda, “is the celebrated writer on political economy, Mr. Everard Tomkinson,” looking towards a bald-headed man, plainly dressed, who at that moment entered. “He has written a very remarkable article on the best mode to be adopted for the liquidation of the national debt.”

“I not see him before, and never hear his name mention. How is dis?”

“He has been unfortunate, your majesty, and has been compelled to take the benefit of the act of insolvency; to accomplish which, he has been in prison.”

“What dis nation put in prison de man dat gives plan to pay de national dedt! What for dat?”

“Because he has not paid his own debts.”

“O dat is good, very good! One man so clever he can tell how to pay de national debt, but not know to pay his own. Dat man fool, not clever man. Who is dat handsome woman who is come in?”

“That is Lady Mary Osborne; a person who has excited much attention in the literary world.”

“What for?”

“Because she writes moral tales, your majesty.”

“She very beautiful. But is it very strange dat beautiful ladies write moral tales?”

“O no! nothing is more common.”

“Why den dis lady so remarkable?”

“Merely because her practice and her writings do not agree.”

“What she practice, madam?”

“She laughs at her husband, says marriage is an unnatural system of slavery; and whilst she advises women to submit implicitly to their husbands, openly defies her own.”

“Den she be like your finger-posts on de roads; she points de way she not goes.”

“How very clever!—quite charming, I declare.”

“No, not clever, only true.”

“There, your majesty, is our most celebrated poet. He writes such exquisite verses, gives descriptions of sunbeams, genial air, azure clouds, and all the delicious enjoyments of summer, that those who read them long to be in the country.”

“Has he ever travelled—ever left England?”

“Never, your majesty.”

“Then dat is one clever man, very clever man indeed. He must have a fine imagination to paint what he never saw.”

“O dear ! how very clever your majesty is.”

“What is clever ? not surely to tell de truth ? Every thing, every body come to London except de Summer. It is long time expected, but it never do come : on de contrary, Winter always, like your fashionables, spends de season in London. Who is dat man with a red face ?”

“He is one of our sentimental writers. His works are so full of tenderness, that no one can read them without tears. He describes the beauty of domestic life, and the charms of goodness, until he makes one in love with virtue ; yet he is a reckless gamester, consumes his nights in the lowest haunts of dissipation, his days in the indulgence of vulgar excesses, and piques himself on his want of feeling, and freedom from all moral constraint.”

“And de people mind what him say, and not what him do, eh ! madam ?”

“O ! decidedly what he writes, and only lament that his example is not as praiseworthy as his precepts.”

“You very good to me, madam, you tell me many things ; I fear I tire you if I ask so many questions.”

“I beg your majesty will not mention it, I have great pleasure in answering your enquiries.”

“Who den are all dem people I do see here, dat I not never see nowhere else ? dem womens mens, and dem, dat smile so much when de dame of dis house speak to dem, and look so cross and shy at each oder ?”

“All writers, your majesty !”

“What de write ?”

“Sonnets to the moon, elegies on dead lapdogs, or singing birds. Verses on the mistress of this house.”

“What do de say about her ?”

“They praise her beauty, her grace, her wit, her genius.”

“I always did hear, dat de poets did write de best on fiction ; and if dat is true, de ought to write fine verses on madam, for she have not de beauty, de grace, de wit, nor de genius, for I hear she write folly ; is dat true ?”

“Perfectly, your majesty. The folly of her books is only to be equalled by her conversation. Both furnish all the circle of her acquaintance with an inexhaustible fund of ridicule.

I could relate enough to fill volumes of her absurdities and weakness."

"You are not her friend, den?"

"O dear yes! How else, your majesty, should I be so well acquainted with her peculiárities?"

"And dis den (*sotto voce*), is de use of friendship in England?"

"Did your majesty speak?"

"No, madam; but may I ask what is dat leetle bed, over which de lady of dis house bend so loving when I come in?—what is it for?"

"It contains a poor unfortunate child which she has adopted, and which, being indisposed, she has placed here, that people may see *her* enact the part of a tender mother."

"But will not de heat, de light, and de noise, make de poor leetle child very bad?"

"Certainly, your majesty."

"How very wicked of dat fool old woman. Will nobody tell her it is wicked?"

"No one; *au contraire*, she will probably have many copies of verses written to-morrow, complimenting her on her tenderness to the child."

"All dat very bad, very bad, indeed. In my *contrey* we not laugh, nor make fun of old women, nor encourage dem to be wicked to poor leetle children. Now I see many ladies, and some few lords, come into dis room, what I meet at oder houses; what for de come here?"

"To laugh at our hostess, whom they call the 'lion-feeder.'"

"What means dat?"

"All remarkable people, no matter for what they may be remarkable, are called 'lions,' your majesty, and when a person collects them frequently at his or her house, that person is called a 'lion-feeder,' and several others come to her solely to see them. Those who are lion-feeders spare neither trouble nor expense to draw remarkable people to their houses, and as there are always plenty of persons with pretensions to be remarkable, without talents to render themselves so, a suite of rooms is soon filled; but those really distinguished for acquirements or genius rarely mix with the ill-assorted *mélange* to be met with at the houses of professed lion-feeders."

"But de lords and ladies, why for de come?"

“To laugh at the people they can see nowhere else.”

“Dat is not kind, I not like dat. I see, too, de laugh muche at de poor old woman who have dis house.”

“O! I assure your majesty they only come here to laugh at the lions and herself.”

“What! when de have taken her salt? Dat is bad, de wild Arabs not do so bad. De English very strange people; de very grave, yet do like to laugh at dose who give dem salt. I not like dat. And what for dis poor old woman write books; is it for de money?”

“No, your majesty, not that she would object to receiving money, but the publishers are too wise to give her a guinea for the books bearing her name. They tell her they will give her *half* the profits of her work, but as there never is any profits, she, of course, gets nothing.”

“Very strange, madam, very strange, dat she not tire of writing when none pay, and all do laugh.”

“The fatigue, your majesty, is not much, for several of the persons present assist her in the task. One renders the plot of her novel comprehensible, another makes the language grammatical, a third adds a few connecting sentences to each page, a fourth writes some verses for it, and a fifth corrects the errors of the press. A seat at her table, or a consideration in money, repays these assistants, and the lady imagines herself to be a second de Staël, little dreaming that she is the object of ridicule of half the town, and, above all, of those who frequent her house.”

“Poor old woman—poor old woman! dat is very sad, indeed. English very strange people, very strange people.”

The rooms now became crowded to suffocation, and Mrs. Vincent Robinson, elated beyond measure, tottered through the suite of rooms, making a silly speech to all those she deemed it necessary to conciliate. Clara approached the little bed in which lay Ada Myrrha, and touching her hand, found it even still more feverish than when she had previously held it in hers. The child looked at her and said—“Do, dear Miss Mordaunt, give me something to drink, I am so thirsty, and so sleepy, and so hot. O dear! how I wish I was in Victorine’s room.” Once more Clara appealed to Mrs. Vincent Robinson, representing how ill the child was, and that lady having produced the effect she desired, by exhibiting herself bending over the little bed, consented to it and its occupant

being removed. Four tall footmen in rich liveries, headed by the groom of the chambers, bore the bed from the salon through the crowd, many of whom looked inquisitively at the poor child, who, with cheeks flushed to a deep crimson, and closed eyes, presented a picture that must have touched with commiseration any heart not insensible to pity.

Clara was now commanded to sing by Mrs. Vincent Robinson, and knowing the utter uselessness of offering any excuse for a non-compliance, she walked to the piano-forte in a state of considerable trepidation. Her youth, beauty, and grace attracted universal attention. The men were loud in their commendations, though several of the ladies confessed that *they* saw nothing remarkable about her. The exquisite softness and melody of her voice soon made itself felt, and her method of singing was so admirable, that even the silly verses of Mrs. Vincent Robinson and Co. (for several of that lady's intimate friends had lent their hands to the completion of the choice *morceau*) appeared tolerable when uttered by her lips, and wedded to the very sweet music to which she had arranged them. The song was encored, and even demanded a third time. The plaudits were universal, and a number of people crowded round the piano-forte to compliment and stare at Clara.

Mr. Theophilus Kinnersly, a poet whose celebrity was known only to a favoured few of Mrs. Vincent Robinson's circle, and the proprietor of a defunct magazine, the brevity of whose existence many were ill-natured enough to assert was caused by his productions filling so many of its pages, now stood up on a high *tabouret*, and, "in a neat and appropriate speech," declared that "the exquisite song which had just been crowned with such signal success was from the gifted pen of their charming hostess, the celebrated Sappho of modern days, who, he felt convinced, the brilliant circle present, containing all that was most distinguished in the literary, political, and fashionable world, would agree with him, merited the wreath of bays which he, the most humble of the admirers of her genius, proposed to place on the brows of her bust."—"Brava!" "*Bravissimi!*" was echoed around, and a wreath of artificial bays (prepared for this *impromptu* exhibition) was placed by Mr. Theophilus Kinnersly on the head of the bust of the hostess.

Mr. O'Shoughnessey, who had witnessed with much jealousy

the prominent part taken in this exhibition by Mr. Theophilus Kinnersly, determined not to remain in the back ground; and encouraged by the complacency with which Mrs Vincent Robinson had listened to his impudent avowal of attachment, went to the pedestal on which stood the bust, took from the latter the wreath that entwined its brows, and, mounting on an ottoman, spoke as follows:—"The gentleman that proposed crowning the *could* marble made a great mistake, in my opinion, when the living head of the *ilegant* poetess was within his reach; so, with the *lave* of this company, I will place the wreath of bays on the real brows of the charmer that merits them, to whom Paris himself, were he to the fore, would be proud to give the palm of beauty."

The uncouth though handsome person of the speaker, his extraordinary dress, and more extraordinary brogue, produced reiterated peals of laughter, which were almost drowned in the cries of "*Brava, brava,*" from all the male portion of the company. Elated by his imagined success, Mr. O'Shoughnessey rapidly approached Mrs. Vincent Robinson, who was seated on a sofa, and bound the garland of bays round her brows. She with affected modesty made a slight resistance to this ceremony, and Mr. O'Shoughnessey with a gentle violence persisted, when, unhappily, the veil or scarf that fell from her head, and which was firmly attached to the braids of her *coiffure*, became entangled in the button of O'Shoughnessey's coat, who, unconscious of the fact, in turning abruptly round to present the crowned poetess to the circle, drew off the scarf, and with it the wig, leaving poor Sappho with her bald head exposed to the view of the whole party. Shouts of loud mirth were now heard on all sides; the unfortunate lady whose disaster furnished the subject burst into tears, while O'Shoughnessey, conscious of having occasioned this painful exposure to her, and dreading the effect it might produce on his future fortunes, seized the wig, with all its accompaniments of brilliants, wreath and scarf, and in his anxiety to rectify the evil he had produced, unfortunately, in his hurry, stuck it, with the back part foremost, on the head it had so lately left.

The laughter redoubled at this unlucky incident, and the tears of the lady were changed into wrath, when O'Shoughnessey, maddened by the shouts of laughter, and the anger of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, loudly declared, that any man who

could laugh while a lady wept must have no feeling, and that he was ready and willing to go out on the green sod with them, one after another, if they persisted in their ill-timed and brutal mirth.

Clara, who had gone to Mrs. Vincent Robinson the moment she had discovered what had occurred, now, at the desire of that lady, assisted to lead her from the salon to her own chamber, followed by O'Shoughnessey, who kept uttering excuses.

"Leave the house, and let me never see you again, you dreadful man," said Mrs. Vincent Robinson; "you are the cause of all."

"Oh! now don't be angry! arragh, have patience, you beauty of the world; only see how I'll settle those that dare laugh at you. Sure, what's the matter after all? I didn't fall in love with you, you darling creature, because you had the appearance of a fine head of hair, when it was only a wig. Never mind, it's all one to me; devil a bit do I care if you never had a hair on your head in all your born days."

"I order—I command you to leave my house, for you are, I repeat, the cause of all this annoyance."

"Is it me? Oh! did any one ever hear the like of this, when it's me that's ready to call out and fight every man that dared to laugh at your purty little white head; and sure its many a one I'll have to fight, for weren't every one of them puppies, ould and young, grinning at you?—yes, faith! and shouting too, and more shame for 'em to show such bad manners."

By this time Mrs. Vincent Robinson, assisted by Clara, reached the door of her dressing-room, which she no sooner entered than, desiring Clara to lock the door, she sank into a *bergère*, and wept afresh. It was piteous to behold the poor old woman, the tears streaming down the deep furrows which they had created in her painted visage, while her wig quite awry, and its decorations falling from it, completed one of the most ludicrous objects imaginable.

Clara poured out some *sal volatile* into a glass of water, and urged her to swallow a few drops of it; and the gravity of her aspect, and the soothing kindness of her manner, tended greatly to calm the wounded feeling of Mrs. Vincent Robinson.

Victorine now entered the chamber by *un escalier dérobé*, and commenced undressing her mistress.

"What shame; people come to a house, devour excellent

refreshments, and when accident happen, begin to laugh at de mistress of de house, till de are fit to tumble on de ground. 'Tis shame, and never happen in Paris."

Mrs. Vincent Robinson's tears flowed afresh at the ill-timed reflections of her *femme de chambre*; and it was only by repeated requests, uttered in a tone too low to meet the ears of that lady, that Clara could induce Victorine to be silent, as she, under the pretext of censuring the guests of her mistress for their rude mirth, dwelt provokingly on the ridicule to which she had been exposed, and aggravated the poor old lady's poignant sense of it.

The next morning found Mrs. Vincent Robinson ill and feverish, the effects of a sleepless night. When Clara tapped at the door of her chamber to enquire how she felt, she heard her voice, in a much louder tone than usual, severely rebuking Victorine, and there seemed to be some unaccountable change in her pronunciation.

"You will probably be the cause of my death, you careless, negligent, wicked creature," said she. "Send for the doctor directly, there is not a moment to be lost. What shall I—what can I do? How speak to the doctor, disfigured as I am."

After waiting a few minutes at the door, Clara was admitted, and approached the bed of the *malade*; but to her enquiries no answer could she get from her, or no notice, than sundry rueful shakes of the head.

Victorine who had left the room to send for Dr. Dolittle, now returned, and made signs to Clara to withdraw, which she having done, the *femme de chambre* shortly followed her, and, unable to repress her laughter, said, "O! mademoiselle, you never not guess what happen. I place every night a glass of white emulsion on de *table-de-nuit* de madame to drink if she have *soif*. Last night, in de confusion of de anger and agitation of madame, I forgot to put de glass of emulsion on the *table de nuit*, and, *malheureusement*, left on it de glass of water into which de false teeth of madame are always left in de night on anoder table. Madame, very tirsty, put out hand, drink eagerly large sup, and swallow two of her false teeth. *O mon Dieu! a-t-on jamais vu une plus drôle de chose?* She say she die, for she never can digest de *deux dents*, and dat I kill her; and I hardly can help laugh. She not speak to you, for not let see she have not *des dents*, and she very angry vid me and mad dat de doctor sall see her, *sans ses dents*, for she,

pauvre vieille folle, tink every body believe dem pretty little white teets are her own—she fret only for herself, she not care for nobody else, except Fidelio.”

Clara went to see Ada Myrrha, and found the child seriously ill. She therefore was glad that, owing to Mrs. Vincent Robinson's mistake, from which she anticipated no very grave result, the doctor could see and prescribe for the child. The patience and sweetness of the little girl created a livelier interest in the heart of her governess every hour, and she devoted as much of her time as was not required by Mrs. Vincent Robinson to the care of her.

Dr. Dolittle soon obeyed the summons sent to him from Hanover-square; assured the alarmed lady that the teeth being mineral, he could administer a medicine that would quickly dissolve them, and she, relieved from her apprehensions, forthwith sent for her dentist to supply the two deficient teeth, entreating Dr. Dolittle, and commanding Victorine, to maintain the most inviolate secrecy on the subject.

Three days after this occurrence, during which period no visitors were admitted, the mistress of the mansion being still confined to her room, a new misfortune took place in the establishment. Mrs. Vincent Robinson had her pet Fidelio reposing on her bed, when, in rising from it, she trod on the dog, who instantly bit her leg. Her shrieks brought Clara to the chamber, who found her uttering loud cries to take the dog away, as it was certainly in a rabid state, while Victorine, from motives of mistaken kindness, was assuring her that the dog was no more mad now than when, as was his constant habit, he had bitten “dat dear little child, Ma'amselle Ada Myrrha.”

Clara took up the ill-tempered little animal in her arms, notwithstanding that he tried to escape, and snarled very much at her, and directly sent for a surgeon.

“Have the dog instantly killed!—do n't wait a moment!—I will have the horrid beast killed!” exclaimed his mistress, forgetting, in her alarm for self, all her past infatuation for her canine favourite.

“Indeed, madam, the dog is not mad,” said she; “and it will be much more satisfactory that it should not be destroyed; for as it has frequently bitten the child and the servants heretofore, it will be well to take care of it to quiet their minds.”

“If it be *not* mad, it will most probably become so, and I

insist on its being instantly hanged. Nay, I will have it shown to me dead, that I may be certain my wishes are obeyed."

The dog was hanged, and the body shown to his mistress before the surgeon arrived, who, as Clara expected, disapproved the measure. He made every inquiry in the household relative to whether the animal was in a rabid state or not, and being assured it exhibited no symptoms of it, and had always been prone to snarl and bite, he endeavoured to pacify the terror of Mrs. Vincent Robinson. She insisted on having her leg cauterized, demanded every ten minutes to have barley water brought to her, in order that by drinking she might be sure there was no commencement of hydrophobia, and wearied every one about her with her absurd notions and childish impatience.

"Yes, I *do* feel a distrust to the sight of liquids, and can scarcely bring myself to taste them."

"No wonder, madam, when you have looked at and tasted them every ten minutes."

"I am sure the dog *was* mad, and I feel certain that I shall be attacked with hydrophobia."

Such were the exclamations uttered by this weak poor old woman, mingled with complaints of the pain of her leg, during the following week. In the meantime, the fever of Ada Myrrha, in spite of the unremitting care of the two physicians called into consultation with Dr. Dolittle, and the devoted attention of Clara and Victorine, continued unsubdued. Sad and trying were the hours passed by Clara at the bedside of the suffering child. During many of them, the poor little thing would rave incessantly of her dear mamma in Heaven, or address affectionate words to dear, dear Miss Mordaunt and good Victorine, unconscious that they were near her. Clara sat up with her every night, as Victorine was kept prisoner in the chamber of her mistress; and, in spite of the repeated remonstrances of the doctors, who declared she would inevitably destroy her own health, she could not be brought to leave the child. But vain was her care, and unavailing the prayers she offered up to Heaven for the recovery of Ada Myrrha. On the tenth day from that on which she had been exhibited in her little bed, in the salon of Mrs. Vincent Robinson, she breathed her last sigh on the bosom of Clara, who, by the orders of the physicians, was removed nearly in a state of insensibility to her own room.

Partial as Clara had been to this interesting child, from the first day she had known her, she could hardly have imagined that she could have become so fondly attached to her in so short a period; and, as she bent over her for the last time before the lid of the coffin was screwed down, many were the tears that fell on that meek and beautiful little face, which, retaining the sweet and gentle expression that characterized it when living, seemed now to have an angelic character added to its pristine loveliness.

As the fears of Mrs. Vincent Robinson daily gained ground, she became more unreasonable and unmanageable. This aggravated the inflammation of the wound in her leg, which grew worse every day. Reminded by her own sufferings of those to which Ada Myrrha might be exposed, she inquired for the child; and observing that Victorine betrayed some embarrassment, she insisted on having the little girl brought to her. In vain did the doctors tell her that such a measure would endanger the safety of the child, anxious to conceal from her the fact of Ada Myrrha's death.

"My life," said Mrs. Vincent, "is more valuable than hers; I *will* see her, to be satisfied that she who was also bitten has not been attacked by hydrophobia." Her impatience and violence increased all the bad symptoms of her leg, in which gangrene had now commenced its rapid progress, and she expired a few hours after she had compelled those about her to acknowledge that the child was dead, as she persevered in insisting on having her brought to her.

The heir to her vast fortune soon took possession of the mansion; and Clara, worn down in health, and subdued in spirits, wrote a note to Abraham Jacob, to apprise him of the sad events to which she had been a witness. The next day he came for her, and being again an inmate of the peaceful residence of Fair Lawn, and her comforts cared for by its excellent owners, she began to recover from the effects of the fatigue and anxiety she had undergone during the last few days.

Once more a resident in this calm abode, with all around her tranquil and contented, the scenes witnessed during her brief sojourn in Hanover Square seemed like those in a troubled dream, but when she reflected on the knowledge of the vicissitudes and uncertainty of life, acquired since she had commenced the painful career of governess, she felt as if years,

instead of months, had been added to her age. The fair and gentle Rachael sympathized in her regret for poor little Ada Myrrha, and even Abraham Jacob gave a sigh to her memory.

With returning health came the anxious desire of Clara to procure an engagement; for not all the considerate kindness of her generous host and his amiable daughter could reconcile her to becoming a dependent on their bounty. Finding her reluctant to remain any longer a visitor at Fair Lawn, Abraham Jacob promised to make enquiries among his friends, whether any of them, or their acquaintances, required a governess. In a few days after, he informed Clara that he had heard that Lady Axminster was anxious to procure a governess for her child. "She is the wife of friend Axminster, commonly called Marquis of that title," said Abraham Jacob, "and is reported to be a gentle and good young woman. Her husband is considered a worthy man. Of thy modest demeanour, thy kind nature, thy honest principles, and thy mild temper, I was asked no questions, but whether thou couldst play music and give thy voice to song; whether thou couldst imitate on paper, or on canvass, the marvels of *inimitable* nature, (which I hold to be sinful), whether thou couldst speak the language of strangers, and embroider? Of these mis-called accomplishments, many were the questions which I was asked. Yes, friend Clara, and verily, it moved me almost into wrath, to hear a meek and modest maiden like thee referred to, as though thou wert but meant to amuse, or teach another to amuse, the light hours of the man of pleasure. But such are the requisites too generally sought in a governess by unwise parents, instead of those qualities, young maiden, in which thou art rich. Thou canst, doubtless, do all these light and vain things which friend Axminster requireth?"

Clara bowed her head in the affirmative, and, for the first time in her life, almost felt ashamed of the accomplishments of which one whom she so highly esteemed as Abraham spoke so contemptuously.

"Verily, friend Clara, thou hast concealed thy talent under a bushel," said Abraham, "for so staid has been thy demeanour, and so unpretending thy manners, that I deemed thou wert unskilled in the vain accomplishments I named; and yet I ought to have remembered that, bred as thou wert, no expense would be spared to give them to thee. Henceforth I will even think less harshly of those persons who can do all that

thou are required, since I find that a knowledge of them does not, as I had imagined, impair the natural good qualities of the head or heart."

At twelve o'clock the next day, Clara, accompanied by Abraham Jacob, arrived, in a plain but respectable-looking carriage, at the door of the Marquis of Axminster, in Grosvenor Square. On their names being announced, they were ushered into a library fitted up in a style of costly elegance, that drew a sound of disapprobation from Abraham, strongly resembling a groan. The rich bindings of the books, the gilded cornices, fringe, and capitals of the lofty cases in which they were placed, the splendid antique busts, the fine globes and beautiful vases and tazzas, seemed to offend his eyes.

"I like not this useless display of luxury, friend Clara," said Jacob. "I think it argues ill for thy chance of repose and comfort beneath this roof; for verily, I have observed that where the caprices of the fancy are most flattered in the external gauds and decorations, a desire to consult the feelings of the heart is least manifested."

Clara was about to deprecate the severity of Abraham Jacob, when the sound of music broke on her ear, and, truth to say, never had the concord of sweet sounds made a less agreeable impression on her mind.

Abraham listened to the duet (the words of which were in the euphonious language of the sweet south, whence the music also had birth), as if he was undergoing a penance; and as the impassioned but suppressed intonations of a sonorous and most musical male voice were heard mingling with the timid but limpidly sweet notes of a female songstress, he turned to Clara as if to demand a solution of this mysterious concert.

"Knowest thou the language which these unseen musicians sing?"

"Yes; it is Italian," replied Clara.

"Yea, verily, friend, the sounds are soft and sweet, even as those of the first words of answering love. But they are unhealthy, and enervating too; yea, verily, I will even stop mine ears, lest they learn to like them. Wilt thou translate the words, that I may know whether they are as enervating as the music to which they are joined in unholy marriage?"

Clara could scarcely repress a smile as she obeyed the wishes of Abraham, and repeated a translation of the words of the Italian song:—

“O beautiful one! what were life without thee?
A desert, where the genial sun never shows light—
A prison, whence hope is excluded, and where misery dwells.
Kill me not with thy frowns!”

“Too dear youth! knowest thou not that thou art loved? Alas! the frowns thou wouldst chide are but as clouds that float across the sun, obscuring for a moment its brightness,—even so I call them to my aid, to conceal my affection and my blushes——”

“Forbear, friend Clara,” repeat not the sinful words, for they are as unmeet to be uttered by a modest maiden, as to reach the ears of a sober man. Verily, I marvel not that ungodly actions ——”

The completion of the sentence was prevented by the entrance of the Marquis of Axminster, a tall stately-looking man of about fifty. He bowed coldly to Clara, and stared with undisguised astonishment at her companion, who, according to the usage of quakers, wore his hat, though seated in a room.

“We are here, friend Axminster, waiting to see thy wife.”

The marquis half smiled, as the phraseology of Abraham explained what his dress ought, at a glance, to have done, that he was of the sect denominated Friends; and having rung the bell, enquired of the answering servant if the marchioness knew that she was expected in the library?

“Her ladyship is singing with Lord Francis Carysfort, my lord,” was the reply.

A close observer might have noticed that this intelligence produced something like a frown on the brow of the marquis, and the servant *did* observe it, though it escaped the notice of Clara and Abraham Jacob.

“Tell her ladyship that a lady and gentleman are waiting her presence here,” said the marquis, in a tone that indicated a more than ordinary sternness, and, bowing to Clara and her companion, he left the room.

The sound of voices in the ante-room were heard; one of them was that of the marquis, and seemed to be speaking sharply, the other was that of a female, and its tones were low, sweet, and deprecatory. The next moment the door opened, and one of the most beautiful women that Clara had ever beheld entered the room, her cheeks suffused with blushes, and a trepidation in her manner that was too striking not to excite remark. The studied elegance of her dress, which was that most becoming of all to a youthful beauty, a morning dishabille, displayed the graceful contour of her figure, while

a cap of delicate lace, tied with pale pink ribbon, lent additional charms to the fair face which it half enshrouded. Even Abraham Jacob, though little used to betray any demonstration of surprise or admiration, could not conceal the existence of both in his mind, as this beautiful creature advanced towards Clara, and in most musical accents, and with a peculiar grace of manner, apologized for having kept them waiting.

There was an indescribable fascination about the Marchioness of Axminster, that failed not to conciliate all whom she approached, and so soothing was its influence, that even the envious pardoned her beauty, her rank, and her wealth, while she unconsciously exercised this natural magic over them. In ten minutes, Clara felt as if she had known and liked her for years, and Abraham Jacob forgot that hers was one of the voices singing words so lately heard, and so severely censured by him. The agreeable impression made on Clara by the marchioness, appeared to be reciprocated ; for, having questioned her on a few points, she stated her perfect satisfaction, and hoped Miss Mordaunt would be able to come to her with as little delay as possible. The reference to Mr. Jacob, the marchioness said, would be quite sufficient ; and a gracious smile and bow towards him, drove from his head a hope he was about to express, that his friend Clara would not be expected to join in profane songs, such as one he had listened to since he entered that dwelling. Clara promised to enter her new engagement the following day, and took her leave, so warmly impressed in favour of the marchioness, that she entertained the most sanguine hopes of finding peace and content beneath her roof. When Abraham Jacob and she were seated in the carriage, she could not restrain the expression of her admiration of Lady Axminster.

“ Truly, thou art right : friend Axminster is indeed comely and well-favoured, but now that I am no longer looking at her pleasant face, for verily it is pleasant to look upon, or listening to her soft voice, I remember many things I wished to have said unto her ; and I reproach myself for not having given utterance to my thoughts. Yea, verily, I ought to have told her of the sinfulness of music, more especially such as that unto which we listened. Yea, friend Clara, I tell thee, that there is much danger in such a woman, when she can thus make Abraham Jacob forget thy interests : verily, it doth seem marvellous : for now that I mind me of all she said or did, I

find nought to have produced this confusion of intellect, except her exceeding comeliness, her pleasant smiles, and her engaging softness of manner."

Clara was struck with the truth of Abraham's observation ; for she too, now, and only now, remembered that nothing had been said of the pupil or pupils she was to undertake to instruct ; in fact, that no definite statement of what duties were expected from her had been even touched on, and that the effect produced on her by the fascination of the marchioness was such as to have driven from her recollection the few questions she wished to ask, or the conditions she had intended to propose. The description given of the marchioness to Rachael by her father and Clara comforted the amiable girl for the approaching separation, though she hinted a fear lest "this new comely and gentle friend" would induce Clara to forget her.

It is seldom that any of the sect called quakers evince such external marks of emotion as were betrayed by Rachael, when Clara entered the carriage that was to convey her to Grosvenor Square next day ; nor was Clara insensible to the affectionate regret of the excellent girl. Abraham, while they drove to London, reminded his young friend that she must apply to him on all emergencies, and bade her remember that he had vested the produce of the sale of her aunt's little property in the funds. He kindly pressed her hand at parting, and placed in it a ten-pound bank note.

"It is a portion of thy own little fortune," said he, "that I place in thy hands ; for it is neither agreeable nor seemly for thee to be without money at thy disposal. Write unto us, dear friend, for verily we shall be anxious to hear that thou art comfortable in thy new abode."

When Clara saw the carriage drive away with Abraham Jacob, she felt a sadness steal over her, that it required the exertion of her good sense to subdue. She had experienced so much kindness from him, and his amiable daughter, that a warm sense of gratitude was excited towards them in her breast : but, as she reflected on the friends thus providentially made, at a moment when least expected, and most needed, she felt as if it were an ingratitude towards the Divine will, to grieve at this separation from them, or to doubt that the same power which had guided their encounter might still shield and console her. When shown to the apartments al-

lotted for her use, Clara was forcibly struck by the contrast offered by them to those assigned to her in the family of Mr. Williamson. Here a tasteful elegance was every where visible in the arrangements of the sitting and bed room, in which every thing conducive to comfort was provided. Shortly after her arrival, the Marchioness of Axminster came to her sitting-room, leading in a beautiful girl, of about five years' old, whom she presented to Clara as her pupil.

"I fear, Miss Mordaunt, you will find my Isabella a little spoilt, but I hope not intractable. Go, darling, and shake hands with Miss Mordaunt."

The child approached, looked earnestly in Clara's face, and then held up her mouth to be kissed. "Ah! mamma," lisped she, "I am sure I shall love this lady very much; for she is almost as pretty as you are, and I love pretty people."

The marchioness smiled, and rose to depart. "You will stay with this lady, Isabella," said she.

"I should like to stay with her and you too, my own mamma," replied the child.

"I will take Miss Mordaunt and you out in the carriage to drive at four o'clock; and if you are very good, you shall have a walk in Kensington Gardens. When you ring the bell, Miss Mordaunt, a servant appointed to receive your orders will answer the summons. You must make yourself perfectly at home, and ask for whatever may have been omitted, or that can be required for your comfort."

So saying, Lady Axminster left the room, but previously to doing so affectionately embraced Isabella, and graciously bowed to Clara. When Clara turned to the child, the soft blue eyes of the lovely little creature were bathed in tears, but she quickly wiped them away, looked imploringly in the face of Clara, and artlessly said, "I did not cry because I was left with you, but only because I like to be always with mamma."

The first lessons were received with a docility that charmed Clara, and an aptitude to learn that led her to anticipate the happiest results. As she marked the extraordinary gentleness and tenderness of nature in the charming child, she was forcibly reminded of poor Ada Myrrha, and she wondered not that her mother should dote on Lady Isabella, and more than once checked the impulse to lavish caresses on her; so engaging yet *naïve* was the child.

At two o'clock, a light but excellent dinner, served with the utmost precision, was announced to be ready in a small *salle-à-manger*, and a respectable footman waited on Clara and her pupil during the repast. This was followed by a small but delicious dessert, and wine of two or three kinds; and, in short, Clara found herself surrounded with every comfort, and treated with a respectful consideration which denoted the desire of the marchioness that her position should be as agreeable as possible in Axminster House. She was gratified by observing, that not a single symptom of gluttony or epicurism was evinced by her pupil during the repast, and while she partook sparingly of the delicate food presented to her, she pressed Clara to eat with a sweet and caressing manner, that was irresistibly charming, as contrasted with the gross selfishness and ill-breeding of the Williamson children.

At four o'clock the carriage was announced to be ready, and a nice-looking female servant made her appearance, offering to assist Miss Mordaunt to put on her cloak and bonnet, and, this offer being civilly declined, prepared the Lady Isabella for going out. Clara found the marchioness already attired for her drive, and was greeted by her with the expression of her hope that her dinner was good, and the reiteration of her desire that she should not hesitate to order every thing requisite for her comfort.

After a drive round Hyde Park, the carriage stopped at the entrance to Kensington Gardens, near the Victoria gate; and the marchioness, Lady Isabella, and Clara descended. As they walked along towards the Bayswater gate, the child said, "I hope, dear mamma, that Lord Francis will meet us here, I do so long to see him." The marchioness uttered not a word, but she let her veil down, though a few minutes before she had thrown it back over her bonnet. "I do hope he will come; don't you, mamma?" repeated the artless child. "Now I see the gate by which he comes so often, and—O dear! how glad I am! here he is."

As this was uttered, a tall, graceful, and remarkably handsome young man had entered the gardens by the Bayswater gate, and approached the marchioness.

"This is indeed a delightful surprise," said he; "I little expected to see your ladyship here."

The marchioness uttered something about the fineness of the day tempting her to walk; but there was an embarrassment

and trepidation in her manner, that seemed to strike Lord Francis Carysfort, for it was him, as well as Clara.

"I was sure you would come," exclaimed Lady Isabella, affectionately holding his hand and looking in his face; "I knew you would come through that gate, because you come oftener through that than any other."

This artless remark brought a heightened colour to the face of Lord Francis, and he bit his nether lip, with something like displeasure.

"Miss Mordaunt, this is Lord Francis Carysfort," said the marchioness, with the same air of consideration, with which she would have presented that gentleman to a lady of the highest rank; and he went through the ceremonial of taking off his hat, and bowing with as much politeness as if, instead of a humble governess, Clara was a person of the highest distinction.

"You do not love me to-day so well as you did yesterday, Lord Francis," said Isabella, "and so I will call you *Lord* Francis, and not *dear* Francis, as I do when you are good."

Again the cheek of Lord Francis grew red, and he made an unsuccessful attempt to conceal his confusion.

"But why are you so changed, so different?" asked the beautiful child, and her eyes became filled with tears.

"I feel tired," said the marchioness, seating herself in an alcove, "and will repose myself here while you, Miss Mordaunt, walk up and down with Isabella."

"I do so wonder what makes Lord Francis so strange to-day," said the child, after a few minutes' silence. "He is always so kind and so good, every day when he comes here to meet mamma and me; and mamma too, she is changed, for she used to be so glad to see Lord Francis when they met, and to-day she did not shake hands with him, or seem glad at all."

"You must not make personal remarks on people, Lady Isabella," said Clara, "for there are days when, owing to occupation or low spirits, friends may appear less cheerful, though they do not feel less kindly; and any observation only serves to render them more silent."

"But ought I not always to speak the truth, and say what I think?"

"The truth should always be spoken," replied Clara, "but there is no necessity for expressing what one thinks on every occasion, as sometimes it might give pain."

“Then I will no more tell Lord Francis that he is changed, and does not love me,” said the child, with a charming *naïveté*, “for I would not give him pain, he is so good, and loves me and mamma so much.”

When Clara and her pupil joined the marchioness and Lord Francis Carysfort again, which was not until the latter had gone to summon them, Isabella ran to her mother and embraced her, removing her veil for the purpose. “O! dear mamma, you have been crying; do let me kiss you again and again; I thought it was only papa that made you cry.” It would be difficult to pronounce which of the three countenances—the marchioness’s, Lord Francis Carysfort’s, or Clara’s, betrayed the most embarrassment on hearing this innocent remark of the child. The mother’s was crimsoned, while that of Lord Francis Carysfort wore an expression of mingled confusion and pain. Clara felt the extreme awkwardness of being a witness to their embarrassment, and of having the knowledge of its cause thus forced upon her; and little Isabella, who marked the agitation of all three, looked at each alternately, and then burst into tears, saying “no one loves me to-day.”

Lord Francis Carysfort snatched her up in his arms and fondly embraced her; and then, as if conscious of having done something imprudent, glanced timidly at the marchioness, and let the child down.

“It is time to go home,” said the latter, in a husky voice that indicated the emotion of the speaker. “Do not let us put you out of your way,” added she, as Lord Francis made a motion to accompany her towards the gate, where her carriage was left.

“Permit me to go with you at least a part of the way,” said he imploringly.

“Pray do, dear mamma,” exclaimed Isabella.

“No, really,” replied Lady Axminster, looking gravely and sadly at Lord Francis, “I must entreat you to let us go alone.”

He took off his hat, bowed profoundly to the marchioness, and politely to Clara, again kissed the dimpled cheek of Isabella, and walked towards the Bayswater gate.

During the drive home, Lady Axminster appeared pre-occupied, and, though she averted her head, Clara observed that her handkerchief was more than once applied to her eyes.

Clara was deeply pained at seeing her emotion, and to this pain was added a secret fear that its source was one of no light nature. The artless disclosures of Lady Isabella, the evident embarrassment of Lord Francis, and the agitation and emotion of the marchioness, even to Clara's pure mind conveyed the impression of something wrong. Yet this dread of wrong precluded not a strong and ardent sentiment of pity for the beautiful creature before her, who, blessed with the lovely child that she doted on, and in possession of all that exalted rank and unbounded wealth could afford, still evinced undeniable proof, by her sighs and tears, that all these possessions could not confer happiness. The purity of Clara's own mind prevented an idea of any actual guilt being attached to the marchioness; the character of her beauty, too, in which modesty was blended with softness, was, to a person like Clara, a voucher for her innocence; but the duet heard the first day she entered Axminster House, coupled with the scene in Kensington Gardens, led, *malgré* her candour, to painful suspicions. In pity to the marchioness, Clara occupied the attention of the child as much as possible, lest, observing her mother's tears, she might add to her chagrin by her artless remarks or affectionate sympathy. When they drove to the door of Axminster House, the marquis was on the point of entering it. He waited to hand the marchioness from her carriage, bowed stiffly to Clara, nodded to Lady Isabella, and, drawing the arm of his wife within his, left the footman to assist them to descend. He waited in the vestibule until Clara and her pupil entered, although Lady Axminster made more than one attempt to induce him to leave it.

"I hope, Miss Mordaunt," said he, "that you do not find Isabella incorrigible, though she has been, it must be owned, dreadfully spoilt." While uttering this, he stooped and kissed the forehead of the child, who seemed so much intimidated by him, that all her gaiety was subdued. "Where have you been, Isabella?" asked the marquis.

The little girl cast a timid glance towards her mother, who said, "we have been walking in Kensington Gardens."

"Why not allow Isabella to answer, when I address her?" demanded the marquis pettishly.

"I am sure she requires her tea," said Lady Axminster turning to Clara, and then looking at the clock in the vestibule, "for it is after her usual time for taking it."

Clara took the hand of her pupil, and, having curtseyed to Lord and Lady Axminster, was withdrawing, when the former, looking sternly at Isabella, said, "Remember that whenever I speak to you, you answer immediately," and walked away.

The trepidation of the marchioness, while this interview took place, was apparent. She seemed to have some motive for preventing any further conversation between the father and child, and Clara could not help thinking that it originated in a wish to prevent Isabella's mentioning *who* had been the companion of their walk. This suspicion pained her, and threw a melancholy over her mind that she could not dispel; nor was the gloom lightened, when Isabella, looking as sadly as her dimpled and beautiful face *could* look, said, "Teach me, dear Miss Mordaunt, to please papa without vexing mamma, for I don't know what to do when papa asks me any thing and I tell him; then he is cross, and makes poor dear mamma cry; so I am afraid to answer him after; and then he says I'm naughty, and spoilt. Do tell me what I ought to do to please both mamma and papa also, for I would love him too, if he would let me."

This artless appeal touched the sensitive heart of Clara, and tended to add force to the painful suspicions that had entered her mind. She could have wept as she looked on the lovely and innocent being before her, thus in infancy drawing down the censure of one parent from the desire to save the other from sorrow, yet unconscious that her hesitation and silence tended towards falsehood; a crime which, young as she was, she would not willingly commit. Here was a creature, endowed with every gift that nature could bestow, and every noble impulse that tends to render a female admirable, yet exposed to the peril of acquiring habits of prevarication, and of "learning to lie in silence;" and to this imminent danger was she exposed by *her* who ought to have shielded her ductile mind from even the approach of evil,—by her mother. And this mother too a doating one, and who, a year before, would have shrunk in dismay at the bare notion that her child should ever hover near the verge of dissimulation, was now leading her towards it. Such is one of the fatal results of an unholy attachment, where even the idea of actual guilt has never sullied the mind.

The next day the Marchioness of Axminster entered the

school-room, and remained present while Lady Isabella went through her lessons. The patience and intelligence with which Clara assisted her pupil, no less than the docility and quickness of the child, delighted the fond mother; yet, notwithstanding this delight, it was evident that at moments she was *distracted* and pre-occupied; and, when drawn from her reverie by some caress or appeal from Isabella, looked at the child with such a mingled expression of love and sadness, as offered irrefragable proof that her meditations were far from being of a cheerful character. She rose to leave the room; then loitered, as if unwilling to go; seemed about to speak, yet broke off, and betrayed evident symptoms of embarrassment and perturbation; until at length she turned to Clara, and asked her if she spoke Italian. Being answered in the affirmative, she then spoke in that language, telling Clara that some letters for her would be addressed under cover to Miss Mordaunt, and that *she* would come to her for them, as she did not wish them to be sent to her. Her blushes, her agitation, while communicating this, produced the most painful effect on Clara; but, before she had time to make a reply, Lady Axminster quitted the room, leaving her in a state of mind as new as it was unenviable.

That *she* should be made the medium of a clandestine, and consequently improper, correspondence, was as repugnant to her probity as to her delicacy; yet how tell Lady Axminster this, without giving her offence, by betraying a suspicion of wrong, a belief in the existence of which could not be otherwise than humiliating to that lady? What was she to do? How decline to receive the letters without giving offence? Then came the recollection of the gentleness, the melancholy of Lady Axminster, and the sternness, the severity of manner as well as aspect, of the marquis. Could it be that the expected letters were from some female friend or relation, to a correspondence between whom and his wife he objected? But then followed the reflection, that the marchioness ought to respect the sentiments of her husband, even though they militated against her own feelings; and that she, Clara, who was beneath the shelter of his roof, ought not to become the medium of violating his wishes. Short-lived, however, was the notion that the letters might be from some female with whom a correspondence was prohibited: for the idea of Lord Francis Carysfort occurred, and Clara could not divest herself of the

suspicion that he was the writer. This suspicion brought the blush of wounded delicacy and shame to her very temples, and with it the fixed determination that, rather than be mixed up in aught so repugnant to her principles, she would, however reluctant to inflict pain on Lady Axminster, refuse to permit any letter to be sent under cover to her. While these reflections were passing through her mind, her pupil had fixed her eyes on the changeful countenance of Clara.

“O! Miss Mordaunt,” said she, “how pretty you look when your cheeks grow so nice and red, all in a minute. Does speaking Italian always make people’s cheeks so pink?”

“Italian has nothing to do with it, my dear,” replied Clara gravely, though at any other time she would have smiled at the question.

“Well, I thought it had,” resumed the lovely child *naïvely*, “for mamma always grows as red as a rose when Lord Francis Carysfort speaks Italian to her; and he almost always speaks it when only mamma and I are with him; and he too gets red when speaking it. You were quite pale in the face, until mamma spoke to you in Italian; and she also grew quite pink while she was speaking to you; so I thought it was the talking Italian that made you all grow so rosy.”

This artless observation of the child, trivial as it might be deemed, served as a confirmation to the previously conceived suspicions of Clara, and still further decided her on adhering to her resolution of refusing to be the medium of carrying on any clandestine correspondence, let the writer be who he may, and even though her refusal should be the cause of her leaving an abode in which she had hoped to be a permanent resident.

It requires no little heroism to act always in accordance with right principles; but it is the obstacles that present themselves to our doing so, which render the triumph to be achieved over them more meritorious. Clara felt this, as she meditated on the least offensive mode of signifying her refusal to receive Lady Axminster’s letters under cover, and grieved at the necessity for adopting a measure that could not be otherwise than humiliating to that lady. She sighed when she looked around on the comforts which she must in all probability soon resign, and then reproached herself for regretting such a loss, when put in competition with duty. She took up her pen to write, and concocted two or three notes one after the other; but each

and all appeared more or less cold, if not harsh, considering the relative positions of the writer and the person written to; and, dissatisfied with them, she determined on expressing her refusal verbally to the marchioness, at the next interview. At four o'clock, as on the preceding day, the carriage was announced, and Clara and her pupil entered it with the marchioness. The order to drive to Kensington Gardens was given by the marchioness in a faltering voice and with blushing cheeks; and the carriage was rolling from the door, when the marquis rode up, ordered the coachman to stop, and, giving his horse to his groom, entered the carriage. The countenance of his young and beautiful wife betrayed no symptom of pleasure, as he announced his intention of accompanying them in their drive, though a studied politeness marked her demeanour.

“Where have you ordered the coachman to go?” asked he.

“To the park,” replied Lady Axminster, and her cheek became crimson as her eye met the glance of Clara.

“And to Kensington Gardens too, papa,” said the little Isabella; “we are going to have a walk with——” Here the child suddenly stopped, checked from concluding the sentence by a look from her agitated mother. The marquis seemed on the point of interrogating the child, who, timid and frightened, she hardly knew why, shrank close to Clara, when the Duke of Willingborough rode up to the side of the landau, and began a conversation. The coachman drove directly towards the entrance to Kensington Gardens, the duke still riding by the side of the carriage chatting with the marquis, and stopped at the gate. The marchioness became pale as marble when the footman let down the steps; and Clara thought, though it might be only fancy, that the marquis looked even more sternly than usual at her. On entering the gardens, Lady Axminster immediately turned to the left, along the broad gravel walk that leads towards the Serpentine, when Lady Isabella exclaimed,—“Do, dear mamma, let us walk the other way, where we go every day to meet——” But before she could finish the sentence, two lady friends of Lady Axminster came up and joined the party. Never before were they so graciously received by that lady, who, gratified for the reprieve their presence afforded from the completion of the sentence of her child, and the consequently dreaded explanation with her husband, appeared so glad to see the Ladies Meredith, that

they, encouraged by her unusual cordiality, continued to walk with her and her lord, who, however, treated them with as much coldness as was consistent with politeness.

“ I shall indulge Isabella’s desire of walking in the other direction,” said Lord Axminster, taking his child’s hand, and leading her towards the Bayswater gate.

“ And I will accompany you,” said his wife, evidently alarmed. “ Miss Mordaunt, hold Isabella’s other hand,” continued the marchioness.

“ Am I not capable of taking care of her ?” asked the marquis, and he glanced sternly at his wife, and waved his hand to Clara, who had approached to obey the command of Lady Axminster, but who now shrank back timidly, and so found herself behind the marquis, who was walking on with his child, while the marchioness followed between the Ladies Meredith.

“ Is that Lady Isabella’s *gouvernante* ?” asked one of the ladies.

“ Yes,” replied Lady Axminster ; and, though she lowered her voice, the words “ very superior” and “ amiable,” as applied to herself, were audible to the ears of Clara.

“ Is she not too pretty for a governess ?” demanded Lady Elizabeth Meredith. “ I have known such mischief arise from having pretty governesses and ladies’ maids, that I always advise my friends to beware of engaging them.”

“ Why, it was only last season,” interrupted Lady Arabella Meredith, “ that our poor dear friend, Mrs. Milner Hampden, had that dreadful affair occur in her house: you surely must have heard of it. Only think how shocking! Her husband was literally found walking with the governess in Hyde Park before breakfast! Fancy how shocking! And then the creature had the impudence to say that Mr. Milner Hampden, being on horseback in the park, joined his children, two of whom he gave his hands to, while the other walked with her. Of course, *he* told the same story, for men are capable of anything on such occasions; and, would you believe it, poor Mrs. Milner Hampden was so weak and credulous, that she would have believed the artful tale, and not have discharged the abominable young person, had not Elizabeth and I advised her to do so.”

“ But now,” resumed Lady Elizabeth, “ we have opened her eyes, and her husband, though a very designing man, can no more deceive her, and they are, consequently, on very bad

terms. Have you not heard about Lady Fanny Elton's *femme de chambre*? O! it is a horrid affair, I assure you; but, if people *will* take beauties into their families, they must take the consequence; it is not every woman who has the good fortune to possess such a husband as Lord Axminster. Did you observe, Arabella, how dignified he looked when he prevented that young person from walking with him and Lady Isabella."

Clara felt the blush of wounded pride and delicacy mount to her cheek, as the coarse and illiberal conversation of the Ladies Meredith reached her ears; and they were so perfectly reckless as to their remarks being overheard by her, that they spoke as loud as if she were not near them. The marchioness made many fruitless efforts to check them, but they were proverbial gossips, and, when once entered on their favourite topic—slander, could not be silenced. The position of Clara was peculiarly awkward, walking alone between two parties, and not asked or permitted to join either; every person she met seemed to observe her with more curiosity than good breeding permits to be exercised towards a lady, but to which her being alone subjected her.

"And who is this young person?" enquired Lady Arabella; "who are her friends and connexions, and among whom has she been living? One never can be sufficiently careful on such points, for there is no knowing to what vulgar associations one may be exposed."

Before Lady Axminster could reply, a loud laugh, something resembling a shout of triumph, was heard, and from a seat on the side of the walk, a young man dressed in the extreme of the fashion rushed forth, and seizing Clara by the arm, exclaimed—"And so I've found you at last, my pickaninny, have I? Where have you been hiding yourself ever since you were sent away from Mrs. Robinson Crusoe's?"

"Unhand me, Mr. Marsden!" said Clara, making an effort to disengage her arm from the rude grasp of her old tormentor, for it was no other than the dreaded Hercules Marsden who had now assailed her.

"By Jove! my little pickaninny, I shall do no such thing," replied he, "after all the trouble I have had to find you!"

"O dear Lady Axminster, what a horrid business!" said Lady Elizabeth. "Well *now* you will admit the danger of having beauties in one's family?"

“I am not surprised, I confess,” observed Lady Arabella. At this moment Lord Axminster, who had reached the gate at Bayswater, was seen returning; and, though shocked at his being a witness to the insult to which she was exposed, she almost rejoiced in the protection which his presence would afford her.

“By what right do you presume to stop or address me, sir?” demanded Clara, with a look of offended pride, that made even the obtuse Marsden feel awkward for a moment; but, quickly recovering himself, he replied—“By the only right I ever acknowledge, my pretty dear—that of pleasing myself. You would not have been so proud and angry with your sweetheart, Mr. Seymour, I warrant me. Ah! you blush at his name, I see; and I’ll be sworn you did not let him remain in ignorance of your abode, as you did me!”

“Only hear, dear Lady Axminster; how dreadful!” exclaimed Lady Arabella Meredith. “This comes of having a pretty governess!”

“You don’t like beauty, I find,” said Mr. Hercules Marsden, turning towards the Ladies Meredith; “and no wonder,—for by Jove! you are more terrific than any Obeah woman I ever saw; and that beautiful creature between you” (looking at Lady Axminster) “may well look frightened at finding herself wedged in between two such hyenas!”

The Marquis of Axminster now approached, and, with a hauteur that might have cooled the courage of a less imperturbable spirit than Mr. Hercules Marsden’s, demanded—“Why he presumed to detain any lady under his protection?”

“Under your protection, my old buck!” exclaimed Mr. Hercules Marsden; “why you ought to be ashamed of yourself. An old fellow like you to be openly avowing yourself the protector of a pretty girl. For young chaps like me it is a different thing; but for you it is really too bad!”

“By what right, Miss—I forget your name—does this person thus address and detain you? Lady Axminster, you had better walk towards the carriage, for it is unfit that *you* should be present at a scene so indecorous. Isabella, go with your mother.”

“O! do papa, dear papa,” said the sensitive child, “let me stay with dear Miss Mordaunt; see how unhappy she is; do let me stay with her.”

“Go with your mother,” repeated the marquis, and his

glance was so stern that the child ran to her mother and clung to her side.

“ Lord Axminster,” said Clara, “ this person is known only to me from having accidentally encountered him at the table of Mr. Williamson, a gentleman in whose family I resided previously to becoming a member of yours. He there assailed me with proposals of the most insulting nature, proposals which, I trust it is unnecessary for me to add, were treated with the contempt they merit.”

“ Yes,” interrupted Mr. Marsden, “ you slighted all my offers, because you preferred Seymour; it was this preference which induced you also to reject the protection of Mr. Williamson, who was, after all, a younger and better-looking man than your present friend.”

The cheeks of the marquis became perfectly crimson, as he listened to this piece of impertinence.

“ Your conduct, sir,” said he, struggling to recover his composure, “ is such as to convince me that you can have no pretensions to the character of a gentleman. This young lady is the governess of my daughter, and, as such, is entitled to my protection. That she should have ever associated with persons like you, shocks as well as surprises me,” and the marquis threw a withering glance of scorn on Mr. Marsden. “ My name is Axminster,” and the peer drew himself up with an air of most aristocratic dignity.

“ Well, Mr. Axminster, all I can say,” replied Mr. Marsden, “ is, that as this pickaninny prefers you to me now, as she before preferred Mr. Seymour, I shall leave her unmolested, though I repeat I cannot compliment her on her taste ;” and away strode Mr. Hercules Marsden in the opposite direction.

The marquis walked with a stately dignity by the side of Clara, without condescending to offer her the least support, though she felt ready to faint from the excessive agitation under which she laboured. “ From what has occurred, madam,” said he, after a few minutes’ silence, “ you cannot be surprised that I desire your continuance in my family may be as brief as possible.”

“ Your wishes shall be obeyed, my lord,” replied Clara, her voice tremulous with emotion ; “ but permit me to add, that the unmerited insult to which I have been exposed, should have rather entitled me to your lordship’s pity and protection, than have deprived me of them.”

"On this point, young lady, you will permit me to be the best judge," said the marquis, and not another word was exchanged between them, until they joined the marchioness and her companions, who stood near to the spot where their carriages were drawn up.

Lady Axminster gave Clara a glance full of commiseration, and Lady Isabella ran towards her affectionately, while the Ladies Meredith drew themselves up with an air of supreme contempt, and, turning towards the marquis, expressed their hopes that he had not been still more grossly insulted by that barbarous savage.

"What horrid things he said," observed Lady Elizabeth.

"Only fancy his calling Lord Axminster an old buck," rejoined Lady Arabella. "Really, people should be very cautious about engaging governesses and *femmes de chambre*."

The marquis waxed wroth at hearing the impertinence of Mr. Hercules Marsden thus reiterated by the Ladies Meredith, with whose malignity he, as well as the whole circle where they visited, was well acquainted. But his anger fell chiefly on the marchioness, for having encouraged them to join her in her promenade, and on Clara for having been the unhappy and unwilling medium of drawing the insult he had received upon him.

The drive from the gate of Kensington Gardens to Grosvenor Square was a silent one. It was evident that the marchioness foreboded some painful result from the *tête-à-tête* walk of the marquis and Lady Isabella, for that he had questioned her why she preferred one walk to another in the gardens could hardly admit of a doubt, as also what she had intended to say when the sentence she was uttering was interrupted. Though stern, the marquis evinced more than ordinary symptoms of affection towards his child; and this circumstance, which should have gratified the mother's heart, only tended to render her more fearful that some *naïve* disclosure of the child had justified his suspicions, and proved the artlessness of his informer. On entering the vestibule at Grosvenor Square, the porter's table, spread with letters and cards, attracted the marquis's attention. The marchioness glanced at them with irrepressible marks of trepidation, while Clara passed rapidly through the hall, and was ascending the stairs when Lord Axminster called her back, and asked her to enter the library.

“Do you know this writing, madam?” demanded he, in a voice of thunder, holding up a letter addressed to her.

She paused, shuddered, and after a few minutes’ reflection, replied, “I do not.”

“The envelope contains a *sealed* letter,” said Lord Axminster. “Open it, and let me see to whom it is addressed.”

With a trembling hand Clara tore open the envelope, read a few lines written on a paper inclosed, and, to her indescribable relief, found that the inclosed letter bore no superscription. She presented the letter to Lord Axminster, who, seeing that it bore no address, appeared confused and embarrassed, restored it to her again, and, muttering some indistinct words, left the room.

At ten o’clock at night Clara was surprised by the presence of the marchioness in her apartment. She appeared agitated and hurried, and, glancing round to be assured that no one was within hearing, exclaimed, “Have you not a letter for me, Miss Mordaunt? Give it to me, I entreat.”

“In doing so, I must inform your ladyship,” said Clara, “that I think myself very culpable in having thus, though Heaven knows how unwillingly, been the medium of a clandestine correspondence. O Lady Axminster! let me entreat, let me implore you, to reflect on the fearful consequences inevitably attending on the line of conduct you are at present pursuing. Think of your child—your pure and innocent child! Alas! how short a time can she continue so if tacitly instructed in the ways of deception. The suspicions of the marquis are aroused; tremble lest they be confirmed, and you, dear lady, be driven in ignominy from your home—from the child you adore.”

To paint the emotion of Lady Axminster during this address, would be impossible. Alternately flushed up to her temples with the deepest crimson, and then becoming pale as death itself, her lips quivered, and her brow contracted.

Clara saw with pity the agitation her words had occasioned, and, bursting into a flood of tears, said, “Forgive me, dear Lady Axminster, for thus inflicting pain on you; you know not the pang it costs me to do so, but a sense of what is due to you—to myself—urges me on.”

Subdued by this avowal, and still more so by the tears and earnestness of manner that vouched for Clara’s sensibility,

while performing a painful duty, the marchioness sank into a chair, and gave way to her tears.

"I am innocent! indeed I am innocent! Miss Mordaunt," said she.

"Forgive me," resumed Clara, "if I speak boldly; but how can innocence exist when a wife receives the constant, the marked attentions of a professed admirer, listens to his vows, and permits him to address her clandestinely? Alas! dear lady, the woman who believes that she can be innocent while pursuing this conduct deceives herself, and risks her own peace and honour, as well as that of those dear to her. Her mind ceases to be pure when an unhallowed passion has sullied her heart; and she wrongs her husband when she once listens to an avowal of attachment from another, even though she does not reciprocate it."

"I thought," replied the marchioness, weeping as she spoke, "that, while I yielded not to the unhappy passion to which you have referred, I incurred not guilt in commiserating it; but you have opened my eyes to my error, and I thank you."

"Promise me, dear Lady Axminster," said Clara, taking her hand, "that you will at once put an end to all clandestine meetings and correspondence; never receive Lord Francis Carysfort except in public, and give no encouragement to an attachment, the bare commiseration of which involves you in sin, and exposes your reputation to the worst suspicions and aspersions. Think of your husband, your child, and tremble lest your conduct should draw dishonour, and lead not only to an estrangement, but to an eternal separation from them.—Look here," and Clara led the marchioness to the next room where Lady Isabella slept. "Could you bear to bring shame and sorrow on this fair and innocent creature? See how calmly, how happily she slumbers."

The weeping mother sank on her knees by the side of the little bed, and, burying her face in its snowy curtains, prayed for some minutes. While she did so, the tears streaming down her cheeks, the countenance of the lovely sleeper changed, as if some painful dream influenced her, she sighed deeply, and murmured, "Mamma, dear mamma!" The agitated mother would have clasped the child to her breast, but Clara interposed, and, leading her into the next room, soothed her into calmness, and won from her a solemn promise that she would rigidly adhere to her counsel.

The voice of the marchioness's *femme de chambre* in the next room, announcing that coffee was served in the drawing-room, put an end to the interview between her ladyship and Clara, and while the former hurried to her apartment to bathe her eyes with rose-water, to remove from them the traces of tears, the latter looked, with a self-complacency she had seldom experienced, on the sleeping child, and returned thanks to the Almighty, that *she* had been made the humble means of rendering the mother aware of her danger, and of having decided her to escape from it. The exultation felt by Clara, from the belief of having saved an erring woman ere yet actual guilt had stained her, prevented her from reflecting on her own position. She scarcely thought of the annoying encounter with Mr. Hercules Marsden, or the disagreeable consequences likely to result from it to herself. She was not, however, permitted to continue long in this state of obliviousness as to her own prospects; for, before she retired to her bed, a letter was delivered to her from the Marquis, expressing his desire that she should leave his house the next morning, in terms that left no doubt that he had formed the most erroneous opinion of her.

The salary for three months was inclosed in this cool and insulting epistle, penned with all the haughtiness that characterised its writer, and which was excited into unusual development towards Miss Mordaunt, by a recollection of the impertinence to which she had been the innocent means of exposing him.

Clara's pride was deeply wounded by this letter, and she instantly returned the money in an envelope, with a few lines of dignified but respectful explanation of the circumstances that led to her unwilling acquaintance with Mr. Marsden, and of deprecation of the harsh and unmerited interpretation put on it by his lordship. There is a sort of magnetic sympathy in pride, and Lord Axminster felt it when he perused the note of Clara; for he now began to think more favourably of her, and even condescended to write a few lines to say so, and to urge her to accept the money offered. This she firmly refused to do, but she was not equally obdurate in resisting the entreaties of Lady Axminster, conveyed in a most kind and pathetic letter the next morning, to accept a valuable ring, containing a lock of her own hair, and that of the Lady Isabella, and expressing in the most touching terms her sense of the

service rendered to both by her dear Miss Mordaunt. Clara could not leave the charming child who had been confided to her, without deep emotion, and Lady Isabella too partook it.

“Do come back to me soon, very soon, dear Miss Mordaunt,” said she, “and I will be so good, and learn all my lessons so well.”

Though certain of meeting a kind reception from her excellent friends at Clapham Common, Clara could not vanquish the repugnance she felt at returning so soon to their abode, without being able to inform them of the circumstances that led to her expulsion from the house of Lord Axminster; for to reveal the secret of his wife accorded not with her sentiments of delicacy or propriety, even though such a revelation might be deemed necessary for her own exculpation. She left Grosvenor Square so early, that she reached Clapham before the worthy Abraham Jacob and his daughter Rachael had concluded their morning repast. Their joy at seeing her was most gratifying to her feelings, and silenced the expression of the surprise they experienced at her unexpected visit.

“I am so glad to behold thee back again, friend Clara,” said Abraham, after a long pause, “that I forgot to enquire to what fortuitous circumstance we owe this pleasure. I somehow or other thought that the mansion of friend Axminster was no fitting abode for thee; that profane music which I heard there has recurred to my mind more than once since I left thee; nay, verily, I have blamed myself for confiding thee to the protection of a roof under which it was sanctioned. Thou hast felt, I am persuaded, that thou wert more suitably lodged with us, and I thank thee for returning.”

“And I too, dearly beloved friend Clara, am rejoiced to see thee again,” said the gentle and affectionate Rachael, “for, verily, no hour has passed since thy departure that I have not missed thy presence.”

Reassured by the confidence and friendship of the worthy father and daughter, Clara felt as if, beneath their hospitable and quiet roof, she had found a haven from the storms of life, and most grateful was she to Providence for having raised up for her such friends.

“I am glad that thou hast come to us this day,” resumed Abraham Jacob, “for thou wilt assist Rachael to show hospitality unto a worthy young man, who will return with me from the city this afternoon, to sojourn here for a few days. He is

not of our persuasion, but is nevertheless as staid and sober-minded as many of the youths of our creed; yea, verily, my acquaintance with thee and him has taught me to believe that all of different religious tenets are not so unsteady and given to idle pleasures as I had imagined them to be. Good day to thee, dear friend!" and he kindly pressed her hand, and imprinted a kiss on the smooth fair brow of his daughter.

"Again, my kind friend," said Clara, "I must solicit your assistance in procuring a situation as governess in some other family. I cannot consent to eat the bread of idleness."

"It is not kind of thee, Clara, to be so impatient to leave us. Thou canst not find a home where thou wilt be more welcome. We will talk of another situation when one offers that I think likely to suit thee; but, I tell thee, I will be very particular indeed where I permit thee to enter, for I consider myself as thy guardian until thou shalt find a better. And now, once more, fare thee well, young maiden."

At five o'clock Abraham Jacob returned to Clapham, and in half an hour after, Clara, on entering the sitting-room, saw her host and his new guest standing on the verandah, with their backs towards the window. The next moment dinner was announced. Abraham Jacob and his visitor entered the room, and, to the unspeakable surprise of Clara, she recognised in the latter Mr. Clarence Seymour. He positively started back on seeing her, and her cheeks became suffused with blushes as she met his glance. He quickly recovered his self-possession, bowed respectfully, but coldly, and took the hand of Rachael, as instructed by her father, to lead her to the dining-room.

"Thou hast met before, I perceive," said Abraham Jacob; "thou didst not mention that friend Seymour was known to thee: nor didst thou, friend," turning to the latter, "tell me that Clara was an acquaintance of thine."

Mr. Seymour looked nearly as embarrassed at this remark as did Clara, and both uttered some phrase of not imagining that the other was known to their host. Never had Clara felt so little at her ease, at the simple but hospitable board of the quaker, as on this occasion; nor did Mr. Clarence Seymour appear more at his. He was silent and reserved, answering the questions of his host by monosyllables; but Clara found his eyes continually fixed on her face, whenever she lifted hers, and observed that he immediately averted his glance,

as if vexed at having been detected in dwelling so intently on her face.

When Clara and Rachael retired from the dining-room, the latter observed to the former that she considered friend Seymour an amiable young man.

“Hast thou long known him, Clara?” asked she; “and why, if it be not indiscreet to ask, didst thou treat him so formally? He too seemed cold and embarrassed; yet, verily, I detected his eyes fixed on thy face more than once when thou wert not regarding him.”

These questions gratified, though they confused Clara. That another should have noticed the frequency of his stolen glances pleased her, though she felt offended at the unaccountable reserve of his manner. From what could it have proceeded? She recalled to memory the respectful assiduity, amounting almost to tenderness, which marked his behaviour during their interviews at Mr. Williamson's, and then fancied that perhaps he had been led to believe the evil report of her made by Mrs. Williamson, to account for her dismissal from her establishment. Then came the recollection of their meeting at the Opera-house, and his reserved behaviour on that occasion. Could it be that he wished to mark his disapproval of her exposing herself to the false position in which he there found her, by treating her with this formality and coldness? This last suspicion was too mortifying to be long entertained, and Clara, while endeavouring to find a motive for the altered manner of Mr. Clarence Seymour, felt that she attached an importance to his good opinion, incompatible with the indifference that ought to be experienced towards a person of whom she knew so little. Rachael, observing that she was pre-occupied, pressed no further questions on her; and, with a good-breeding not always to be found in persons with higher pretensions to refinement, directed the topic of conversation to a less interesting point.

Abraham Jacob and his guest soon joined Clara and Rachael in the drawing-room, and, the evening being sultry, they adjourned after tea to the verandah. While the father took Rachael apart, to converse on some domestic arrangements for the ensuing day, Clara and Clarence Seymour found themselves alone at one end of the balcony. Both felt a consciousness of the restraint and awkwardness of their position, and remained for some minutes silent. At length Clarence

Seymour spoke, and asked how long Miss Mordaunt had been residing with her present friends ? The abruptness with which this question was put startled her, yet the emotion betrayed by the questioner evinced that a stronger motive than mere idle curiosity prompted it.

“ I only came here this morning,” replied Clara.

A visible change took place in the countenance and manner of Clarence Seymour, on hearing this answer : he looked sternly at Clara, and moved towards the other side of the verandah. Abraham Jacob now joined him, and, drawing his arm familiarly through that of Clarence Seymour, led him to the spot where Clara was standing.

“ How strange are the chances of this world !” said the good man. “ Here, friend Clara, art thou and Clarence again beneath the same roof, though neither suspected that the other was known to me. All thou didst tell me, Clara, of the harsh and unfounded suspicions entertained against thee by the foolish wife of friend Williamson has been repeated to me by Clarence, who has rendered ample justice to thy modesty and other good qualities. I required no confirmation of thy artless statement, for I never doubted thee for a moment ; yet hadst thou been disposed to assert that which was not correct, in the belief that I had no means of ascertaining the truth, how wouldst thou have been aggrieved at being thus suddenly confronted with one who knew that which thou hadst concealed.”

The next day, Clarence Seymour accompanied his host to London, and again returned with him to dinner. His manner continued as constrained and formal towards Clara as on the previous day, and hers became even more reserved than before. Her residence at Clapham, hitherto so peaceful and soothing to her feelings, now lost its charm by the unaccountable manner of one whose conduct, she was deeply mortified to find, had so powerful an influence on her happiness. Often, in the privacy of her chamber, did she ask herself why she allowed the behaviour of one, who was nearly a stranger, to wound her ; and as often did she determine on treating his opinions with the indifference she would have evinced to those of any other person only slightly known to her ; yet when they next met, some irrepressible indication of deep interest betrayed by Clarence Seymour towards her, again troubled the equanimity she endeavoured to establish

in her breast, a breast until now undisturbed by aught approaching to the passion that was every day taking deeper root in it. Again she appealed to her kind host to assist her in finding a situation in some other family, and again he urged her to remain at Clapham, with all the earnestness of goodwill and a real desire to gratify not only himself but Rachael, by securing her society. But Clara was so urgent in her request, that at length he promised to enquire among his acquaintances; and she felt more at ease in the prospect of soon being removed from a daily contact with Clarence Seymour, now grown so painful to her.

In a few days after, Abraham Jacob informed her that he had heard of a situation likely to suit her, in the family of a country gentleman, living some fifty miles from London, the friend of an acquaintance of his. The family, he said, were at present in London, and he had made an appointment for her to call on the lady the next day. The gentle and affectionate Rachael reproached Clara for her impatience to leave them, and a cloud of sadness overspread her fair brow during the rest of the day, in anticipating the loss of Clara's society.

When the party at Clapham were assembled in the evening on the balcony, enjoying the balmy air, redolent with the odours of the rich flower-garden beneath it, Rachael turned pensively to Clara, and said—"Why wilt thou persist in leaving us, dear friend?"

Clarence Seymour started from a reverie in which he had been some minutes plunged, and, forgetting his reserve, abruptly asked—"When, and where, is Miss Mordaunt going?"

"I know not how soon she may leave us altogether," said Rachael; "but to-morrow she is to see a person who requires an instructress for her children, and I cannot flatter myself that friend Clara is likely to be rejected."

Clarence Seymour was silent and thoughtful for some minutes; he looked anxiously at Clara, and Abraham Jacob having now proposed a walk in the garden, the party sallied forth. Clarence attached himself to the side of Clara, evidently with the desire of speaking to her; but, as Rachael leant on her arm, he seemed prevented by her presence from speaking. Her father called Rachael to show her an alteration he had planned; and Clarence, seizing the moment of her departure, asked Clara—"Why she had not answered the

letter he wrote her the morning of her departure from Mr. Williamson's? I know you got the letter, Miss Mordaunt," continued he, "for the porter assured me that he had put it into your hand the moment you were entering the coach."

"Was that letter from you?" asked Clara, blushing a rosy red; "but forgive the stupidity of my question, when you had just told me it was. That letter I ——"

"Look here, dear friend," exclaimed Rachael Jacob, coming suddenly to her, "didst thou ever behold a more beautiful specimen?" holding up a yellow rose.

Clarence Seymour wished the fair quakeress far away for this interruption, and, truth to say, Clara too wished that she had been permitted a few minutes' longer conversation with him, that she might have explained her never having perused the letter. Perhaps it was the circumstance of her never having acknowledged the receipt of this letter that had produced the remarkable change in his manner towards her. This supposition pleased her, and her heart beat quicker as she dwelt on its probability. Abraham Jacob now joined them, and as neither he nor his daughter left Clara for a moment during the rest of the walk, Clarence Seymour, though burning with impatience, could not bring himself, in their presence, to renew the subject that occupied all his thoughts.

When Clara opened her chamber-door the next morning, she found a letter addressed to her beneath it. Her heart whispered that it could only come from Clarence Seymour, and she trembled with emotion as she took it in her hand. She was some minutes before she had courage to break the seal, and her heart throbbed rapidly as she did so. She felt that on the contents of that letter depended more of her happiness than she had dared to acknowledge to herself could be influenced by its writer; and, to proclude the possibility of interruption, she hastily locked the door of her chamber.

"I am about to ask two questions," wrote Clarence Seymour, "to the answers to which Miss Mordaunt will pardon me if I say that I attach the utmost importance. Miss Mordaunt has acknowledged the receipt of my letter, sent to her the morning of her departure from Mr. Williamson's; yet, strange to say, appeared unacquainted with the contents. How did it occur that, having received the letter, she neither knew the writer nor what it contained? I will not wound the delicacy of Miss Mordaunt by repeating, or even hinting on,

the statement made to me by Mr. Hercules Marsden, relative to the more than equivocal position in which he asserts he lately met her in Kensington Gardens; but I must entreat Miss Mordaunt to answer a question originating in no idle curiosity—no common interest;—a question which, I believe, nearly touches her honour, and one on which, I confess, my happiness depends. Did Miss Mordaunt receive honourable proposals from Lord Francis Carysfort? and if not, why did she permit a man of his established reputation for gallantry to write to her?—I—with pain and indignation—saw him seal a letter and address it to Miss Mordaunt. This letter was left openly on the table of a public club, where the superscription was seen by many persons as well as by me, though by no one with the same feelings. I heard him bantered on some new conquest—some *bonne fortune*, as they termed it, each attaching the name on the superscription—the name of Miss Mordaunt—to their ribald remarks and odious suppositions. Though hoping that it was not *the* Miss Mordaunt whom I knew, whose name was thus bandied around in a club among the licentious and profligate companions of Lord Francis Carysfort, still the name was too dear to me to witness its being thus profaned without feelings of pain and indignation. Two days after, I learned from Mr. Hercules Marsden that Miss Mordaunt resided in the house to which that letter was addressed, for he followed the carriage into which that lady entered on leaving Kensington Gardens, and traced her into the mansion of the Marquis of Axminster, in Grosvenor Square. From the first moment that I beheld Miss Mordaunt, she excited an interest in my heart never previously experienced; this interest has never subsided; for, though deeply mortified at her not having noticed the letter I addressed to her, and shocked at the knowledge that Lord Francis Carysfort had made her name the topic of his unprincipled friends,—I have not been able to meet her again without experiencing the same feelings that she formerly excited; feelings that neither absence nor time can diminish!”

Various and contending were the emotions that agitated Clara on perusing this letter; yet one predominated over all the others, and this was the certainty of knowing herself beloved.

To a delicate-minded woman there is, perhaps, no more painful or humiliating position than that of feeling conscious of

a preference that is not reciprocated, though it may have been fostered into strength by many of the insidious but undefinable attentions with which artful men captivate the susceptible hearts of young and inexperienced women. How many means may such men employ for this purpose without uttering a single syllable that might be cited to prove against them. Looks, sighs, expressions intelligible only to the speaker and the person to whom they are addressed; a silence, sometimes more eloquent than words; these, and innumerable other tacit marks of interest, may be put forward to assail a youthful heart, which, when yielded, may be but little prized; nay, the conqueror may deny having ever attempted the conquest he has achieved. Clara was now relieved from all doubt of Clarence Seymour's affection, and there was joy—there was happiness in this conviction. Again and again she perused the confession of his unabated interest. *She* had not then indulged a sentiment unauthorized by *his* preference. It was the undisguised symptoms of his that had encouraged hers, and her womanly delicacy and pride were soothed by his distinct avowal of what only his looks and manner had hitherto led her to hope—to believe. But soon came the recollection of the explanation he demanded, an explanation on which he declared his happiness depended. How, without committing the reputation of Lady Axminster, could she explain that the letter he had seen addressed to her was for that lady? This she would not, could not do. No! never would she reveal that fact; and as she recalled to memory the weeping and gentle creature, who had so patiently listened to her rebuke, and so faithfully promised to attend to her counsel, she inwardly vowed never to betray the secret to which, without any fault on her own part, she had been unwillingly made privy.

The joy so lately experienced by the avowal of the affection of Clarence Seymour was now quite overcast. She felt that without the required explanation, however his heart might own her ascendancy,—his reason would pronounce against her; and her heroism had no slight struggle to sustain when she contemplated his anger, his coldness—his suspicions—and, above all—his sorrow—when her refusal to give it should reach him. Pride may be called in as a useful auxiliary to assist a woman to bear up against the inconstancy or the injustice of her lover, but few can withstand his sorrow, for no weapon in the whole armoury of love is so dangerous to a

female heart. Clara experienced this, even in only anticipating the sorrow Clarence Seymour might experience, and felt a severe pang when she reflected on the necessity of occasioning it.

At length a thought struck her, and she determined to adopt its suggestion. She would explain to Clarence Seymour the loss of the letter, and assure him, as she could with perfect truth, that her acquaintance with Lord Francis Carysfort had never passed the limits of a bow, that they had never exchanged a syllable, and consequently, that he had never made her any proposal. How did she wish to be able to say that he had never written to her; but that was, alas! impossible, for he had addressed a few lines on the envelope of the letter for Lady Axminster, and, though they bore not his signature, she was convinced they came from him. She wrote to Clarence Seymour the letter she intended, and thanked him for the interest he had evinced towards her, suppressing every indication of how warmly, how truly, that interest was repaid; for her pride and delicacy revolted from the idea of revealing it, now that, unable to give the explanation he required, all communication between them would, most probably, cease. Dissatisfied with her letter, she was about to commence writing another, when, the bell for breakfast having rung, she was compelled to descend; so, hastily sealing it, she placed it on the table in the hall, where letters were generally left to be claimed by those to whom they were addressed. The family and Clarence Seymour were already assembled in the breakfast-room, and the latter eagerly sought her glance as she entered. Her cheek became dyed with the brightest tint of rose as she met his anxious gaze; her eyes drooped beneath its intenseness, and every sound of his voice thrilled her with emotion; for that voice, always musical, now seemed more low and tremulous than she had ever remarked it to be. Her heart whispered that *she* was in some way the cause of this change, and it increased her tenderness towards Clarence.

“He thinks of me now with kindness,” thought Clara, as she caught his deep eyes fixed on her face; but alas! how soon will that mild and affectionate countenance have lost its softness, when he finds that I cannot give the explanation he seeks,—an explanation on which his good opinion depends. What must, what *can* he think of me, when he reads a letter so evasive—so different from what he expected to receive?”

At length the repast was finished, and Abraham Jacob reminded Clara that it was time that they set out.

“Friend Seymour will bear us company to London,” said Abraham, “so prepare thyself for our departure.”

Clara left the room to put on her cloak and bonnet, and, ere she had reached the end of the vestibule, beheld Clarence Seymour approach the table, eagerly seize the letter she had left on it for him, and quickly disappear to peruse it. She now wished that he had not got it; for knowing that its contents were not likely to satisfy him, she felt the utmost reluctance to encounter him while he laboured under the first impression of disappointment it would be sure to inflict.

On descending, Abraham Jacob informed her that Clarence Seymour had determined on riding, instead of driving to town, and it was a relief to Clara’s feelings not to see him, though until she reached the metropolis she thought of nothing else.

Abraham Jacob’s carriage stopped at Weller’s Hotel, in Lower Brook Street, where Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring were staying, and our heroine, accompanied by her friend Abraham, was ushered into a room where that gentlemen and his wife were seated at breakfast.

“I have brought this young maiden to thee, friend Manwarring,” said the worthy quaker, “having heard that thou wert in want of an instructress for thy children.”

“Pray, sit down,” said the lady, and she formally pointed to two chairs, and continued to eat the muffin on which she was engaged when they entered. Mr. Manwarring, in the meanwhile, was doing ample justice to some cold chicken and ham, which indeed he was devouring so voraciously, that, though he attempted more than once to speak, the sounds he uttered were inarticulate. Abraham Jacob waited for some minutes, but being reminded, by the pendule on the mantel-piece, that it only wanted a short time to the hour fixed for an appointment on business in the city, he took his leave, promising to send back the carriage for Clara.

Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring still continued to eat, apparently forgetful of the presence of a stranger, their operations only interrupted by demands for coffee and tea, and complaints that the breakfast was a very indifferent one; a fact which any one who saw them demolish it would never have suspected. At length,—for even the longest meals, like the longest hours,

must have a termination,—they ceased to eat, and Clara now hoped that Mrs. Manwarring would attend to her; but no sooner had they finished breakfast, than a consultation about dinner, and it seemed to them a very momentous one, commenced.

“I will order ox-tail soup,” said the gentleman.

“Let it be then for *one* only,” interrupted the lady, “for I prefer soup *à la reine*.”

“Why can’t you do as I do?” asked the husband gruffly; “surely ox-tail soup is a much better thing than that insipid mixture of chicken, veal, almonds, and milk? Hang me! if it does not resemble a white emulsion warmed.”

“How can you make such disgusting comparisons, Mr. Manwarring?”

“And how can you like such bad things, Mrs. Manwarring?”

“I am determined to have salmon, with sauce *à la Hollandaise*.”

“There you go again, always selecting just the dishes that you know I dislike.”

“No, Mr. Manwarring; it is, on the contrary, *you* who always order what you know I detest.”

“I can tell you one thing, Mrs. Manwarring, and that is, that I will have turbot and lobster sauce, that I will; so if you choose to be so unreasonable as to insist on having two kinds of fish as well as soup, you cannot wonder if I think you not only very selfish, but very extravagant into the bargain.”

“*Me* selfish! *me* extravagant, Mr. Manwarring! Well! I’m sure, after that, nothing can surprise me. I, who am the least selfish and the least extravagant of any woman in the world! But *I* know who *is* selfish and extravagant too, when his own palate is to be pleased.”

“And I know, Mrs. Manwarring, who never thinks of any one’s palate but her own.”

Clara felt so embarrassed at being a witness to this vulgar display of conjugal coarseness, that, wishing to check it by reminding them of her presence, which she believed they must have forgotten, she purposely moved her chair. Both turned and looked at her, perfectly unconcerned, and then resumed their consultation.

“I will have *côtelettes à la Maintenon*,” said Mr. Manwarring.

“I thought you would,” replied his wife, “in order that I

might be annoyed by the effluvia of the *échalotte* always used in dressing them."

"Well, that's capital, Mrs. Manwarring! when you know that you dote on *boudin à la Richelieu*, in which *échalottes* cut a conspicuous figure."

The entrance of a waiter, to announce that Miss Mordaunt's carriage was at the door, put an end to the controversy of the *gourmande* couple; a controversy that not a little disgusted the unwilling witness to it.

"Can you undertake to instruct my children in every branch of education?" asked Mrs. Manwarring, turning to Clara.

"I hope I should be able to succeed in my endeavours to do so, madam," was the modest reply.

"But are you *quite* sure you are capable?" demanded the obtuse lady; "for I like to get a positive answer instead of a dubious one."

Clara blushed at this rude interrogation, and at the necessity it implied of her speaking of her own acquirements; and this blush and modest hesitation, far from prepossessing Mrs. Manwarring in her favour, gave rise to suspicions that they originated in a consciousness of incapability; for that any person could feel embarrassed on any subject, and, least of all, on one in which an opportunity was afforded of speaking of self, never entered into her head.

"We live some fifty miles off, Miss—what's your name!"

"Mordaunt, madam."

"Well, Miss Mordaunt, we live, as I before said, some fifty miles off, and it would be no use to engage to go so far, unless you felt *quite* sure of giving satisfaction. I don't enter into details, but I expect that you teach my daughters every thing that young ladies ought or can be taught. I allow no masters of any kind. What are your terms, Miss Mordaunt?"

This question came quite unexpectedly on Clara. She hesitated, felt embarrassed, was disposed to leave the terms to Mrs. Manwarring, but, recollecting that the liberality of that lady might be very problematical, found courage to say that she expected fifty guineas per annum.

"*Fifty what?*" cried Mrs. Manwarring, "you cannot be serious; you surely cannot expect so unreasonable a salary? I never heard the like. Why, there is the French governess at Lady Walker's, a nice clever person, who not only educates the children, but makes all her ladyship's dresses, and washes

her lace, and she has only thirty pounds a-year, and finds her own tea."

"I regret, madam, that I have given you the trouble of receiving me," said Clara, rising to withdraw.

"Could you not take forty pounds?" asked Mrs. Manwarring.

Never had Clara felt more ashamed than at thus bartering for her paltry stipend; but the coarsely-revealed economy of the person she had to deal with gave her courage to persist in her demand.

"Well, then, let us say forty-five."

"I have named the lowest terms, madam, that I could possibly accept;" and, curtseying to Mrs. Manwarring, she was directing her steps towards the door, when a noise, something between a cough and a hem, from Mr. Manwarring, who had hitherto been occupied in reading the newspaper and using his toothpick, attracted his lady's attention. After some signals exchanged between the husband and wife, the latter said—

"If, Miss Mordaunt, I accede to your terms, and they are, I must confess, very high ones, can you, when not occupied in instructing the children, make yourself useful in assisting at plain work?"

"I should not like my doing so, madam, to be made a specific condition; but I should not be unwilling to occasionally assist."

"Of course you will pay for your own washing?"

"Really, madam, I fear that I must decline."

"Well, let it stand; but only remember, that I expect you will not be extravagant in sending to the laundress. Clean linen twice a-week is the utmost I allow."

"And the utmost you give yourself," muttered the husband audibly.

"When can you come? We leave town to-morrow, and I should like you to be down as soon as possible."

"How am I to travel, madam?"

"Why, let me see"—and then Mrs. Manwarring approaching her husband, they whispered together, and she said with an air meant to be very gracious, "you can go down with us, in our carriage. Be here to-morrow morning by ten o'clock; that is, *after* you have breakfasted. Send your trunk by the stage-coach—here," giving her a card, "is the address. And now you may go; for I have a thousand things to do. Good morning. Mr. Roberts told us that we might rely on the

recommendation of Mr. Jacob, without requiring any other reference, so you need not give yourself any further trouble. Now, Mr. Manwarring, ring the bell for the bill of fare."

These were the last words Clara heard as she left the apartment; and she stepped into the carriage that was to convey her to Clapham Common with no exalted opinion of the family into which she was about to enter, or with no pleasurable anticipations of her residence with them.

The kind Rachael was disappointed and sorry that Clara had engaged with the Manwarrings, for she had hoped that the parties might not have suited each other, and that her friend would have been left with her. When Abraham Jacob returned from the city, he announced that Clarence Seymour had sent him a note, stating that business would prevent his returning to Clapham for some days.

"Friend Clarence is changed of late," said Abraham Jacob. "He used to be the most equal person imaginable in his temper and spirits, but of late he has grown pensive and moody, forms resolutions and breaks them again; and is more stern, too, than I thought it was in his nature to be. Verily, though I do not like to risk being considered indiscreet, or of a prying habit, I will even question the youth."

Clara felt the blood mount to her very temples during the observations of her kind friend Abraham, and had he or his daughter chanced to look at her at the moment, they could not have failed to notice her emotion; but luckily, as she thought, both were just then examining a new plant brought from the greenhouse by the gardener, so her changeful countenance escaped observation. How well was Clara aware, that it was the desire of avoiding her which led Clarence Seymour to remain in London. She hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry that he had adopted this determination, but she sighed when she recollected that months, years perhaps, might elapse before they met again, that he had parted from her in anger, and without an explanation of a correspondence on which he had acknowledged his good opinion depended.

"Thou art thoughtful, my child," said Abraham, observing the reverie in which Clara was plunged. "Now tell me the result of thy visit. I hope thou hast not entered into any positive engagement; for, verily, I liked not the man or woman that we beheld. Yea, verily, they were too intent on the creature comforts set before them, to turn to examine the

person to whom they meant to confide their children. To my enquiries, friend Roberts answered that they are rich and respectable. Now I have known many who are rich without being respectable, although, in the general acceptation of the word, the possession of wealth is supposed to imply respectability. Friend Roberts, I know, deemed it so; for he expressed surprise that I questioned him further, after he had assured me that friend Manwarring kept a large account with his house, had always a considerable sum on the credit side of it, paid his debts punctually, and was much respected in his county. Now a man doing all this, friend Clara, may be, notwithstanding, a person under whose roof I should not like to confide thee; for he may be of coarse mind, of brutal habits, tyrannical, and grossly selfish, yet pass in the world as respectable. Such is the misuse of terms, and such is the respect paid unto wealth."

Clara concealed how entirely her own impressions of the Manwarrings coincided with those of her friend Abraham, and, having informed him that by her engagement she was to depart the next day, he again and again reminded her that, should her abode in the family to which she was going prove disagreeable, she might always count on a warm welcome at Clapham.

Often, during the last few days, had Clara wished to question Rachael Jacob about Clarence Seymour, for she longed to know all particulars about him; but though the words rose to her lips, a diffidence, never previously experienced, prevented her uttering them. She consequently knew no more of him than his name; yet, with this ignorance of who he was, or whence he came, she felt he was dearer to her than all his sex beside. As they sat at tea in the afternoon, Abraham Jacob again referred to Clarence Seymour.

"His father was my friend," said Abraham, "yea, verily, my friend of friends; for he was unto me as a brother. He left no lack of wealth when he was called to a better world, and bequeathed his only child to the guardianship of friend Williamson (even him in whose family thou didst sojourn) and myself. He wished his son to be brought up in habits of simplicity; and it was to effect this desired object, that he left instructions that the boy should pass as much of his time beneath my roof, as was consistent with his scholastic occupations, varied by occasional visits to his other guardian, friend

Williamson, who was then a plain and active man of business in the city. Now that the youth has grown into the man, the habits of simplicity have adhered to him: for, he who could vie with the richest of the aristocracy in expense, is content with the moderate expenditure of a person who possesses not one quarter of his fortune. This simplicity of living in friend Clarence proceeds not from avarice, for, verily, he is generous and noble to others, and many are the acts of his beneficence. Thou, friend Clara, for now that he is absent I may name it to thee, wert often the subject of his conversation with me. He wished to bestow on thee a competency, which would preclude the necessity of thy going out as an instructress, and asked me to arrange this in a way that his name should never be mentioned in the transaction. Nay, blush not, my child, nor be thou wrathful, that, knowing thee to be poor, he wished to enrich thee. Thou must not be proud, friend Clara, though I do not dispute thy right to insist on gaining thy own subsistence; a determination which is creditable to thee. No later than this day did Clarence urge me on this point again, in the letter he wrote me to the city. So thou seest, my child, that thou art not without friends."

The blushes that mantled the cheek of Clara owed not their source to pride: a warmer, a gentler feeling, sent them from her throbbing heart. That Clarence should think thus anxiously of her interests, even when vexed and wounded at her refusal to give him the explanation he desired, touched her profoundly, and made her still more than ever sensible of his merits. The next morning, long before any one in the house was moving about, Clara glided with stealthy steps from her chamber, and, impelled by an irresistible impulse, entered that so lately occupied by Clarence Seymour. The emotion experienced on entering the chamber of one loved and absent is inexplicable. Clara felt it now, as, sinking on a chair, she burst into tears. On the table were scattered his books and papers; a pen recently used was lying on the page of an open blotting-book, and several rough outlines of profiles, all designed, as she saw at a glance, as copies of hers, met her gaze. Then he had thought of her in this chamber; his pencil, guided by his heart, had here traced her likeness over and over again. Tears of deep tenderness flowed from her eyes, and she wondered how she had courage to have refused the explanation he had sought. Had she given that explana-

tion, would he have absented himself to avoid meeting her? Ah, no! her heart told her he would not. He would have avowed all the affection which she now felt convinced he entertained for her; and what happiness, what ineffable happiness, might not have been the result! But she had dashed the proffered cup from her lips; and now they might never meet again. She wept in sadness as these thoughts passed through her mind, but yet her tears lost much of their bitterness as the objects around her reminded her how wholly occupied by her image he had been in that chamber. Some of his garments were folded and laying on the commode: a pair of gloves, his slippers and *robe de chambre* were near the table. She could not resist touching them, and pressed the pillow on which his head had rested to her lips, when, hearing a movement in the servants' apartments over head, she fled from the chamber terrified lest her visit to it should be discovered, and hastily regained her own.

Her parting with the mild and affectionate Rachael was marked by all the fondness that characterised the kind and sensitive hearts of both. During the drive to London, Abraham Jacob failed not to entreat, nay, to command her to return to his house, as a home, whenever she found her situation beneath another roof irksome. "Remember," said the excellent man, "that I hold thy money in my hands, friend Clara, ready to be advanced to thy order whenever thou requirest it. Be not sparing of aught that can contribute to thy comfort; consider me as thy banker—thy friend—thy father. I am well to do in the world, and have more wealth than suffices for my wants and those of my daughter Rachael; so be not sparing, I tell thee again, but apply to me on all occasions."

Clara found herself more than once scanning the benevolent countenance of Abraham Jacob, not to fix it still more forcibly in her memory, for there gratitude had indelibly traced it, but because she thought (for such fancies are not uncommon in love) that the face she now looked upon would soon be examined by the eyes of the object dearest to her on earth, and that he would think of her when dwelling on the face of him who had seen her later than himself.

When Clara heard the last sounds of the retreating wheels of Abraham Jacob's carriage, she felt that she had indeed parted from her best friend, and a sense of loneliness stole over and saddened her mind. But the tones of a well-remem-

bered voice from the half-open door of an apartment near where she stood to catch the last glimpse of the receding carriage, soon gave wings to her feet, and she flew up stairs with a velocity that excited the vulgar *plaisanteries* of the waiters, porter, and footmen, who were lounging in the hall. The voice was that of Mr. Hercules Marsden, and she trembled to find herself so near him.

Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring were discussing a dish of *côtelettes de veau*, the savoury fumes of which impregnated the salon when Clara entered, and the "How d'ye do, Miss Mordaunt?" of the lady was scarcely intelligible, owing to her mouth being filled with food. A nod from the gentleman was the only sign of recognition, and this was not accompanied by any encounter of his eyes, for he seized the moment of making to help himself to the two remaining *côtelettes* on the dish.

"Mr. Manwarring, what *do* you mean?" asked his wife, looking at him with somewhat the same expression of countenance exhibited by a cat who sees its milk lapped up by another.

"What do I mean?" reiterated the gentleman; "why, precisely what you may guess, namely, to eat these two cutlets."

"But you forget that you have already *had two*, while I have had but one, Mr. Manwarring."

"Is it my fault that you eat so confoundedly slow, Mrs. Manwarring?"

"Is that an excuse for helping yourself to *both* the *côtelettes*, Mr. Manwarring? Never was there such ill breeding—and to a woman, too."

"You forget, Mrs. Manwarring, that men never consider their own wives as women."

"Then as what do they consider them, sir?"

"Why, as something not quite man, but far removed from that creature we have in our mind's eye, when we say 'a beautiful woman,—a lovely woman,—a fine woman,' or 'a pretty woman.'"

"Well, this is no time to argue the topic, for I am too hung y to talk.—You have, of course, breakfasted, Miss Mordaunt," said Mrs. Manwarring, and again she filled her mouth with a portion of the edibles with which her plate was piled, her enunciation becoming almost unintelligible. Though the fact of her having breakfasted was assumed, the countenance of the lady betrayed no inconsiderable degree of uneasiness lest Clara

should deny it, and that she should have to pay for that repast for her; but when our heroine declared she had already breakfasted, Mrs. Manwarring's face brightened, and she continued to eat with an appetite that could only be equalled by that of her lord and master, who also looked more graciously towards her, when she had affirmed that she had already breakfasted; and, like his wife, seemed wholly engrossed by the good things he was devouring.

Clara stood for some minutes in the room, neither the lady nor gentleman telling her to be seated; but concluding what was really the fact, that both had totally forgotten her presence, she ventured to sit down. To a woman brought up in good society, and accustomed to receive the attentions and courtesy generally paid to her sex, there is something peculiarly offensive in being as wholly overlooked as if she formed a part of the furniture of the apartment, and Clara was reflecting on this *désagrément* of her position, when a momentary cessation of the clatter on plates of knives and forks, and the disgusting noise of mastication, denoted that the repast was drawing to a close.

"Ring the bell, Mr. Manwarring," said his wife; "don't you see I have not done breakfast."

"Ring the bell, Miss Mordaunt," said Mr. Manwarring, and he turned to Clara, giving this order with as much *nonchalance* as if she was a waiter or footman.

"Have sandwiches for *two* put up," said Mrs. Manwarring, to the waiter.

"And send the bill," added her husband.

"Mend my gloves, Miss Mordaunt," said Mrs. Manwarring, throwing, rather than handing, a very soiled pair to Clara, who answered that she had neither thread nor needles to perform the operation.

"No thread or needles,—bless me! that is *indeed* being negligent."

"My work-box, madam, is in my trunk."

"In future, you must never be without the implements for working about your person, for either my daughters or myself are constantly requiring some little job. But could you not borrow a needle and thread from the chamber-maid?"

Clara rose to comply with this behest most reluctantly, for she not only dreaded encountering Mr. Hercules Marsden on the stairs, but felt a strong disinclination to form an acquaint-

ance with the chamber-maid, by borrowing. She however left the room to perform this disagreeable commission, and found in the passage three or four waiters, who hardly moved to give her room to pass. Turning to the one whom she had seen attending in the apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring, she requested he would procure for her the loan of what she required from the chamber-maid.

"Yes, ma'am," replied he, without leaving the place where he stood, and giving a sly leer at the other waiters, who smiled in return.

Clara felt abashed, and was entering the apartment she had left, when the words "I wish she may get it," accompanied by laughter, struck her ear. Again she seated herself, when Mrs. Manwarring, observing that she was not at work, said, "Well, Miss Mordaunt, why don't you begin to mend my gloves?"

"The waiter has not yet brought me the implements for working, madam."

"Bless me! what has the waiter to do with such things? Why did you not go in search of the chamber-maid yourself?—that would have been the simplest and shortest mode of effecting your purpose."

"You make such a confounded noise, Mrs. Manwarring, that I can't read the paper. You never can be quiet."

"Nor you civil, Mr. Manwarring. Don't stand daudling there, Miss Mordaunt,—I do hate a daudle. Go and find the chamber-maid, and get a needle and thread from her."

Glad to escape from a prolongation of this rudeness, Clara hurried from the room, and again encountered the group of waiters in the passage. An ill-suppressed titter on their parts prevented her addressing any question to them, and seeing a flight of stairs before her, she hastily ascended. On the first landing she met a young woman, and concluding her to be the person of whom she was in search, she asked if she was the chamber-maid?

"Chamber-maid!" reiterated the woman addressed, "I am *not* a chamber-maid; I wonder who I shall be taken for next? Chamber-maid, indeed!" and off she walked, casting a look full of indignation at Clara.

The next person she encountered was a woman with some linen in her hand, and believing that there could now be no danger of mistake, she addressed her, saying she wanted to speak to the chamber-maid.

“Well, then, if you do, you must find her, that’s all,” was the answer, and again Clara resumed her search.

A young person with a sweeping-brush in one hand, and a bundle of soiled towels in the other, now emerged from a dark closet on one side of the lobby, and Clara told her she wanted the chamber-maid.

“Which of them, for we are four?” asked the woman.

“I really don’t know,” replied Clara; “but I believe the one that attends Mrs. Manwarring’s rooms.”

“And who swears that same lady only gives her sixpence for making up her room, and taking up her time in dressing her, for she is so shabby as never to bring a maid with her.”

“Perhaps you would be so obliging as to lend me a needle, some thread, and a thimble,” asked Clara; and while she spoke she drew forth her purse, and slipped a shilling into the hand of the chamber-maid.

“O! certainly, miss, with pleasure; and if you slip into this room I will bring them to you in a jiffy,” and she opened the door of a sleeping-apartment, into which she led Clara, and then disappeared.

Sundry articles of costume, with a dressing-table covered with the paraphernalia of a male toilette, indicated that this chamber appertained to one of the masculine gender, a circumstance that rendered Clara very unwilling to remain in it. But how was this reluctance increased when, on casting her eyes over the superscription of an open letter on the table, she saw that it was addressed to Hercules Marsden, Esq. She was on the point of quitting the room, alarmed at having entered it, when, to her inexpressible terror, she heard the loud voice of him whom she so much feared in the passage. She glanced around the room in an agony of fear, the sounds of his dreaded voice approaching still nearer, when perceiving a door partly concealed by the paper that covered it, she quickly opened it, and, thinking only of avoiding her tormenter, rushed into a small closet, and drew the bolt inside. She had scarcely done so, when Mr. Hercules Marsden entered the chamber she had left, moved about the room as if in search of something, then tried to open the door of the closet; but, finding it resisted his efforts, muttered imprecations against his servant, for not leaving the key, and then again renewed his movements in every corner of the room. O! how her heart beat, and her limbs trembled, lest the servant should come and reveal

that he had not the key, and that then the door might be forced!

Presently the chamber-maid opened the door of the apartment. "Beg pardon, sir," said she, "I did not know you were here."

"What the d—— brought you then?"

"I thought there was a young lady here, sir."

"You did, did you? And pray what business was that of yours? Your stupid employers take care that there should be no young ladies in gentlemen's rooms, as if it could be any affair of theirs. There, don't stand staring like a stuck pig, but be off, and shut the door after you."

Clara heard the door closed, and Hercules Marsden muttering something to himself; and then he seemed, to her dismay, disposed to be stationary, for she heard him draw a chair to the table, and throw himself into it. She became painfully nervous, as she reflected that she must be a prisoner as long as he continued in the chamber, and that, should his servant arrive while he was there, they would probably open the closet door by force. She also remembered that Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring would doubtless institute a search through the house for her whenever their carriage was at the door; and all these thoughts rendered her position every moment more disagreeable. When nearly an hour had elapsed, she heard a person enter Mr. Marsden's room, and tell him that a gentleman desired to see him immediately; and soon after she heard him leave the apartment. To unbolt the door was the work of a moment, though her hand shook with fright while she did so. Anxious as she was to quit her hiding-place, she had not courage to leave it for a few minutes, her limbs almost refusing to support her trembling frame; but remembering that at any moment Hercules Marsden might return, she staggered, rather than ran, across the room, opened the door into the passage, and at the outside of it found the chamber-maid standing and looking over the stair-case.

"Why, where have you been hiding yourself, I should like to know?" asked she, with an air in which surprise and suspicion were mingled. "Where were you hid when I went into the room out of which you have now come?—and what makes you tremble and look so pale?" and she seized Clara by the arm and looked sharply in her face. At this moment the voice of Hercules Marsden was heard on the stairs, which

he was rapidly ascending, and Clara, almost maddened by the fear of encountering him, burst from the grasp of the chamber-maid, and rushed in a contrary direction followed by her. She stopped not until she arrived at a flight of steps, evidently the *escalier dérobé* of the house, and here, pale as death, and panting for breath, she lent against the bannisters for support.

“Why, I say, what *does* all this mean?” demanded the chamber-maid. “There is something amiss, I’m sure, and I insist on knowing; for it looks very strange, ay, and very suspicious too, I can tell yon.”

“I would not meet that man for the world!” said Clara, still trembling violently; “I have reasons for not meeting him; that is the whole cause of my concealing myself in the closet within his chamber; for when I heard his voice coming to the room, I could not get away without meeting him at the door, and that I would not do for the whole world. Now question me no more, but show me the way to Mrs. Manwarring’s room;” and here she drew out her purse and slipped half-a-sovereign into the hand of her rude questioner, who, silenced by the gift, led her down the devious stairs and through dark passages, until, opening a small door, she found herself close to the apartment of Mrs. Manwarring, which she hastily entered.

“And so, you are come at last, Miss Mordaunt?” said that lady, her countenance and manner exhibiting every symptom of ill-suppressed rage. “And where *have* you been, I desire to know? The whole house has been searched for you in vain; and really, I must add, your conduct, to say the least of it, is very unaccountable. One thing too, I must insist on, which is that you pay for the hour that you have kept the post-horses waiting.”

“You really are enough to drive a man mad, Mrs. Manwarring,” said the husband of that lady, who had entered the room during her harangue. “So you think we have not been kept long enough waiting already; but you, forsooth, must stand jabbering here. Come along—come along; every thing is ready, and you can hear Miss What-d’ye-call-her’s explanation of her mysterious disappearance as you go along; for she may take my place in the carriage, as I shall go on the box.”

Mr. Manwarring preceded his wife down stairs, and Clara

followed in the rear, taking especial care to let down her veil, and dreading at every step to encounter Mr. Hercules Marsden. She was, however, fortunate enough not to meet him, and, having entered the carriage, felt infinitely relieved as it rolled away from the door of the hotel that contained him. They had only advanced a few paces, when Mrs. Manwarring again peremptorily demanded an explanation of Clara's long disappearance, a demand that not a little embarrassed her. She, nevertheless, simply related all the circumstances, and was no less hurt than surprised when her auditress abruptly remarked—"Why, you don't mean to say that you hid yourself in a dark closet to avoid meeting a gentleman, when you had only simply to apologize for having entered his room, and leave it when he came? Really this is a piece of folly I can't comprehend! Did you think he would bite you? or did you fancy yourself so irresistible that he must have fallen in love with you at first sight?"

This rudeness awakened the pride and native dignity of Clara, and lent an expression of both to her countenance, which somewhat checked the impertinence of Mrs. Manwarring, as our heroine assured her that her motive for concealment did not originate either in a fear of being bitten or fallen in love with; but that she had a strong objection to meeting the gentleman any where, and consequently an additional one to being found in his chamber.

"And what, pray, may be the cause of this strong objection?"

"His having rendered himself offensive to me, in a family where I encountered him."

"And might I enquire *how* he had rendered himself offensive?" asked Mrs. Manwarring, her countenance assuming a mingled expression of doubt and mockery.

"By attentions which, though I repulsed, I could not make him sensible of the impropriety of continuing."

"Well, all I can say is, that your story is a very extraordinary one; and that another time you will act more decorously too, in similar circumstances, by leaving a room openly, rather than in concealing yourself in a closet within it. Who that saw you enter the bed-room of a gentleman, and then saw him go into it, stay an hour there, then quit it, while you left it some minutes after, would or could, believe that your visit there was an innocent one, or that you were hid in a closet all the time? Your character would be impaired, if not to-

tally destroyed, by the discovery of such a tale; and I candidly tell you it has not served to raise it in my estimation; nor do I know whether Mr. Manwarring, when he hears of the circumstance, will permit you to remain in our family!"

Most painful were the ruminations of Clara during the rest of the short journey to Manwarring Park, interrupted only by the agreeable noise of its lady owner's jaws masticating the sandwiches with which she had stored the pocket of the carriage, not one of which had she the civility to offer to her companion, and by a heavy shower, inducing Mr. Manwarring to change his place on the box with her. Though shocked at the brutality of a man's exposing a woman to the rain, in order that *he* might avoid it, Clara was glad to escape from the irksome presence (society it could not be called) of Mrs. Manwarring, to which she preferred that of the taciturn but not uncivil servant, by whose side she took her place on the box. When they arrived at Manwarring Park, it was evident from the harshness of his manner and looks, that its master partook the suspicions of his wife relative to Clara. Neither of them addressed a single word of welcome to the forlorn young stranger, entering for the first time their abode, nor even directed towards her a look of recognition. She stood in the hall, not knowing where to go, and wholly unregarded by the masters and servants who occupied it.

"Send the cook immediately," said the lady.

"How are the horses?" asked the gentleman.

"The children are, of course, quite well?" said the affectionate mother.

The cook now appeared, and her mistress commenced giving instructions about dinner with a particularity that denoted how deeply interested she was in that repast, a fact which surprised Clara, who had witnessed her recent demolition of the paper of sandwiches. "I have brought down some salmon and a lobster," said Mrs. Manwarring; "so let the latter be made into sauce, and mind you put the roe into it, and a little—mind, a very little Cayenne pepper."

"No!" interrupted the husband, "I will have the lobster broiled in the shell; and caper-sauce will do very well for the salmon."

"But I prefer lobster sauce, Mr. Manwarring," said the lady; "and as I took the trouble to have the lobster brought down expressly for sauce, I will not be disappointed!"

“Neither will I, Mrs. Manwarring; I have set my mind on eating the lobster broiled, and broiled it shall be; so pay attention, cook, that it is sent up in no other shape!”

Mrs. Manwarring’s cheek grew purple with anger; but not choosing, or perhaps not daring, to vent it on her husband, she turned round to Clara, and rudely asked her “why she stood staring there, instead of going to her room?” To the answer that she “did not know where to go,” the reply was, “couldn’t you ask! Some people are so helpless,” added Mrs. Manwarring, “that they can do nothing. Now, on reflexion, could we not arrange, Mr. Manwarring,” and she put on a bland look, “to have *half* the lobster put into sauce for me, and the other half broiled for you?”

“No!” replied he; “but I have no objection to allow the front claws to be used for your sauce; so, cook, you *may* do that; but mind you do not put any more in, or you shall catch it.”

A servant now marshalled Clara to the back stairs, where a housemaid took her in charge, and conducted her to her bedroom. This chamber was as destitute of all comfort as that to which she was consigned at Mrs. Williamson’s; but, so oppressed were her spirits, that she hardly noticed the circumstance. There are few positions more calculated to produce depression of mind, than that of finding oneself, for the first time, in a house where one receives neither the politeness due to a guest, nor the friendly familiarity extended towards an inmate. Clara felt this, and in marking the rudeness of Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring, and the inattention of their servants, gave a sigh to the recollection of the different treatment she experienced in the mansion of the Marchioness of Axminster, and in the more humble but not less comfortable abode of Abraham Jacob. She now became sensible of hunger, and was reminded by the sensations produced by this vulgar infirmity, that many hours had elapsed since she partook of the early breakfast at Clapham-common. Still, no offer of any refreshment was made; so she performed the ablutions which her journey rendered desirable, changed her dress, and was on the point of ringing to ask to be conducted to the school-room, when Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring entered her room, accompanied by two strange-looking men.

“Here’s a pretty business,” said Mrs. Manwarring, her face flushed with anger; “here is the person you came in search of.”

“Do your duty,” interrupted Mr. Manwarring; “it shall never be said that I interfered to obstruct the ends of justice, or to screen a culprit.”

“You are our prisoner, miss,” said one of the men.

“Good heavens! what does this mean, what have I done?” asked Clara, her cheeks blanched with terror, and her limbs quivering from agitation.

“Come along, miss, you’ll know that soon enough. We’ve brought a post-chaise to convey you to Lonon, to be examined before a magistrate, and so the sooner we start the better.”

“O, madam! will you not protect me from insult, from outrage!” exclaimed Clara.

“Insult and outrage, indeed!” said Mrs. Manwarring; “I’m surprised at your expecting that I should lend myself to screen a person who has committed theft.”

“Theft!” echoed Clara; “accuse *me* of theft!” and her person seemed to recover its natural dignity.

“I can assure you,” said Mrs. Manwarring, addressing herself to the police, “that the story she trumped up to explain why she was so long absent from my apartment at the hotel did not at all satisfy me, and that strong suspicions of some crime even existed in my mind.”

“Yes, and in mine also,” rejoined Mr. Manwarring; “I thought she’d been about no good; but, to say the truth, I did not think she had been stealing.”

“Come along, miss; it is absolutely necessary that we start, otherwise you must pass the night in the station-house.

Clara shuddered at the mention of it.

“And now, miss, we must search your person.”

“You will not surely, madam,” said she, appealing to Mrs. Manwarring, “refuse to allow this insulting ceremony to be performed by one of your female servants, and in your presence! Do not,—O! do not let me be subjected to treatment from which every womanly feeling recoils!”

“You must not interfere, Mrs. Manwarring,” said the husband, “for, if you do, you will have to attend the examination and trial as a witness.”

The policemen now approached Clara, as if to lay hands on her; and she, turning pale as death, and then becoming suffused with crimson, implored Mrs. Manwarring to protect her and to have the search of her person confided to any female in the

house. This favour, however, she seemed but little disposed to grant her, and rudely intimated as much; but one of the police, pitying the agony in which he saw her plunged, with more humanity than those who ought to have protected her, civilly said that he had no objection to depute the search to a woman, and that he and his companion would remain outside the door while it was performed. Mrs. Manwarring would not permit her maid or the housekeeper to search Clara, lest, as she said, she might be deprived of their services, if required to attend the trial; but she assented to having the task deputed to the housemaid, who was summoned.

“You ought to be ashamed of yourself, that you ought,” said this unfeeling woman, “to draw such discredit on my house. What will the neighbours think, when they hear that two Bow-street officers have been sent down to take away, as prisoner, a person engaged to be the governess of my children? But I’ll take care to give my opinion very roundly to your quaker friend Abraham Jacob, that I will. And you, Mr. Manwarring, I trust you will bring him to a sharp account for recommending such a person to us. Come along, Mr. Manwarring, come along; *you* surely do not mean to be present at the search, so come with me.”

The room being now left with only Clara and the housemaid, the Bow-street officers remaining outside the door, she submitted to a search, performed with as much respect as so humiliating an operation could be attended with, the housemaid evidently being persuaded of the innocence of which her master and mistress seemed to entertain the worst suspicions. The purse of Clara, with the keys of her dressing-box and trunk, were delivered to the officers, and great was her annoyance when, having requested that a half-sovereign might be returned to her, to give the housemaid, she was informed that even that trifling sum could not be considered hers, until it was satisfactorily proved that she had come honestly by it. Her dressing-case and trunk were now searched, and in the former was found a ten-pound Bank note. The announcement of this fact to Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring was received by them as proof positive of the guilt of Clara.

“There, you see, I was right,” said the lady; “you may depend that is part of the spoil.”

The Bow-street officer having examined the note narrowly, discovered on the back of it the name and address of

Abraham Jacob, and stated this circumstance, which only drew from Mrs. Manwarring a declaration of her conviction, that the artful young woman had written it herself, to avert suspicion.

It is strange, but nevertheless true, that in circumstances similar to that in which our unfortunate heroine now found herself, people are much more prone to believe in the guilt than in the innocence of the accused. Clara observed this, with a feeling of dismay that added to the horror of her situation, and wondered how she had incurred the ill-will of Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring, that they should thus pronounce her culpable of a crime of which she would not suspect a stranger, even of the poorest class, without some strong proof of guilt.

Her trunk being attached to the chaise, she was led to it by the Bow-street officers; and, while passing through the hall, heard Mrs. Manwarring tell a servant to order dinner to be served half an hour earlier than ordered, as she had been so agitated by the horrid business which had occurred, that she felt the want of refreshment. "And tell the cook," continued she, "that I wish her to send up some sauce *poivrade*."

The whole of the servants flocked to the upper windows, and to the stable yard-gate, to see the carriage drive away with the prisoner, who held her handkerchief to her eyes, and wept with a bitterness of anguish never before experienced, at the degradation to which she was exposed.

"Don't take on so, miss," said one of the men, between whom she was seated.

"It's no use crying; and, as yet, nothing has come to light to criminate you."

"Tell me, I entreat you, of what I am accused?" asked Clara, her voice almost inaudible from emotion.

"Why, miss, the housemaid at Weller's Hotel says she saw you come out of a gentleman's bed-chamber, after she had gone into the same room to look for you only a short time before, when you were not to be found. She also declares that, on meeting you, you were greatly flurried, and that, the more she questioned you, the more embarrassed you appeared. That moreover, you acknowledged to her that you had concealed yourself in a closet, and that when you heard the voice of the gentleman in whose apartment you had been concealed, you burst from her grasp, and ran away towards the

back stairs in a state of the utmost terror, and owned to her that you would not meet him for the whole world."

"All this is perfectly true," said Clara; "but—"

"Don't criminate yourself, miss; confess nothing till you are on your hexamination," interrupted the officer.

"I have no confession to make; I was only about to say, that the circumstances which you have stated, and which I acknowledge to be correct, involve no crime, and do not explain why I am thus made a prisoner."

"Why, this is the worst of the business, miss. No sooner had the chamber-maid returned to the lobby up stairs, after having left you at the door of Mrs. Manwarring's sitting-room, than she heard Mr. Marsden swearing that he had been robbed of two hundred pounds, which he had left in his open writing-box when called down to speak to a gentleman. Now, as you were known to be concealed in a closet inside that room, and that no one else was seen to come out of it since Mr. Marsden had left it, you are accused of having taken the notes; and your alarm and running away, when you heard the gentleman's voice, is said to have confirmed the suspicion."

Shocked beyond all expression by this disclosure, Clara now fully comprehended the dreadful position in which she found herself placed. She tried to reflect on what step she should take in this terrible affair; but the agony of her mind nearly precluded the power of reflection. At length Abraham Jacob, that kind, that tried friend, occurred to her troubled thoughts. "*He* will not believe me culpable—he will not abandon me in this hour of adversity," said she; and, taking courage, she asked the officers if they, instead of taking her to the police-office, would take her to the house of a friend?

"Why indeed, miss, though we really would wish to oblige you, seeing that we think it a pity one so young and so genteel as you, miss, should be exposed to such trouble; I don't think we could call on any friend of yours, unless it was one that chanced to lie directly in our way."

How did the heart of Clara sink and droop, when she recollected that, long ere she could reach London, Abraham Jacob would have returned to Clapham-common, and that consequently she could not hope that the men, whose prisoner she was, would consent to take her there. Her terror became insupportable at the idea of being compelled to pass the night in one of those places in which persons in her dreadful position

are condemned to remain; for, vague as were her notions of such places, she trembled at the anticipation of entering any of them.

“You see, miss, as I said before, if your friend lives any where near our road, I won’t refuse to stop to let you see him for a few minutes.”

“Alas! he resides at Clapham-common,” said Clara.

“At Clapham-common,” repeated the man; “and what, pray, may be his name?”

“Abraham Jacob.”

“You don’t say so?—What, you are a friend of Abraham Jacob’s, the good quaker?—Well, who’d have thought it!”

“Vy! did’nt you see his name on that there note?” said the other man.

“O! do you know Abraham Jacob?” asked Clara, bursting into tears as the recollection of the quiet and happy hours passed beneath his roof crossed her memory, contrasted with the degrading and terrible situation in which she now was placed.

“And his daughter, my dear good Rachael?” added Clara, softened by the remembrance of the kindness of that gentle girl.

“Ay, miss, I know them well, and would go a hundred miles to serve ’em, that I would. Why, bless your art, miss, the good gentleman has given my poor infirm old mother a cottage and little garden, rent-free, these ten years, that he has; and Miss Rachael gives her warm clothing every winter. Know them, miss! a good right me and mine have to know them. Why, ’t would take a day, miss, to tell you half their goodness to my poor old mother; and how they used to send her broth and puddings, and all manner of delicacies, when she was so ill; ay!—and come and see her themselves, that they did. I’ll tell you what, miss, I can’t take you to Clapham to-night, that’s clear; but I’ll go there and tell Mr. Jacob what has happened, that I will, before I sleep; so keep a good heart, and let us hope for the best. With such a friend as Mr. Jacob, things can’t go hard with you. Why, what a fool I was; I thought I heard that there Mrs. Manwarring mention his name, as having recommended you to her; and then I pricked up my *hears*, has I always does when I ears him mentioned; and then it went quite clear out of my ead; but never mind, miss, don’t be afeard.”

The whole manner of the man became changed : never rude, it now was respectful. His subordinate, following his example, evinced as much deference to Clara as their relative positions could admit. The chaise now stopped at an inn where the horses were to be changed, and the Bow-street officer civilly offered his prisoner any refreshment of which she might wish to partake : but, though faint from long fasting, and the dreadful agitation she had suffered, Clara refused his offer, lest her acceptance should expose her to the prying glance of any of the persons of the post-house. She requested that the blind of the window next the inn might be drawn up ; and, taking the place of the officer who had descended from the carriage, she leant forward to inhale the fresh breeze, in order to gain strength for the examination in London, to which she looked forward with so much dread.

While she sat plunged in painful thought, a travelling-carriage and four drove up, and stopped precisely by the chaise, at the side next which she was seated. She drew away her head and shrank back, but not before she heard her own name pronounced and repeated in tones of kindness.

“ *It is Miss Mordaunt, mamma ! dear Miss Mordaunt ! do let me see her, let me speak to her !* ” and the next moment a servant approached the chaise, and, respectfully taking off his hat, “ presented the Marchioness of Axminster’s compliments, and she wished to see Miss Mordaunt.”

The agitation of Clara, at receiving this message, nearly overpowered her. Shame dyed her face with its crimson hue ; she faltered, tried to speak, and burst into tears.

“ Why the fact his, “ said the policeman, “ this ere young lady can’t very well go to that there lady, because as how she is our prisoner.”

The servant looked astonished, and left the chaise, to communicate the intelligence he had heard to the marchioness. In a moment the Marquis of Axminster, to the surprise and alarm of Clara, came up to the door of the chaise, and, with a kindness of which she little believed him capable, saluted her cordially, and begged to know whether, in the painful position in which he had heard she was placed, he could be of any assistance to her.

One of the Bow-street officers, who had left his prisoner while he was paying for the horses, now returned, and instantly recognizing the marquis, told him that the young lady

was at liberty to go into his carriage or into the inn, whichever his lordship preferred.

“I am returning to London,” said the marquis, “and will be answerable for the appearance of this young lady, if you will permit her to accompany the marchioness and myself to town, while you follow. I am, as you may ascertain by inquiry, lord-lieutenant of this county; consequently have the power of exonerating you from blame for a compliance with my wish on this subject.”

A *douceur* of considerable amount, slipped into the hand of the officer, accompanied the marquis's request, and perhaps aided in securing it a ready compliance, for he was permitted to hand the weeping but grateful and astonished Clara from the chaise into his coach, where she was warmly welcomed by the marchioness and her late pupil. In observing the cordiality of the manner of the marquis, affording such a striking contrast to his treatment of her when under his roof, Clara was lost in surprise; but this sentiment ceased, when his lordship, taking her hand, said—“Miss Mordaunt, I have many apologies to make for misunderstanding you so completely, and undervaluing you so wholly as I did, when you were an inmate of my house. I have written to express my sense of your conduct, and my regret for my own, and I am sorry that my letter has not yet reached you. Lady Axminster,” and he took his wife's hand and pressed it to his lips, “has rendered you ample justice, and has taught me to duly appreciate your honourable principles and fine qualities.”

“Yes, Miss Mordaunt,” said the marchioness, and she blushed deeply, “I have told my husband every thing; for I could not bear to hear him censure one to whom I owe a debt of gratitude never to be repaid, for having restored me to a sense of what was due to him, to our dear child, and to myself.”

The marquis now questioned Clara on the circumstances connected with her present painful position; and when she had related all to him, stating her first acquaintance with Mr. Hercules Marsden, and the troubles in which he had involved her, he assured her that all the influence he could command should be exerted to free her from the meshes of the web in which she was so innocently and painfully entangled.

“It will be too late when we arrive in London,” said he, “for the magistrate to see you; I will arrange for your stop-

ping at my house to-night, see the magistrate myself, and answer for your future attendance. Be assured, my dear Miss Mordaunt, all shall end well, and I trust you will again become the preceptress of my child, and the esteemed friend of the marchioness and myself."

"I shall never forgive these odious Manwarrings for believing that there could be even a shadow of guilt attached to her," said Lady Axminster, looking affectionately at the open brow and fine countenance of Clara.

"Yet you have forgiven one, who could, who did, doubt her goodness," observed the marquis.

His wife laid her hand on his, with an expression of such confidence and tenderness beaming in her face, that Clara almost forgot her own troubles, in the pleasure she experienced in witnessing the good understanding existing between this now happy couple, and in reflecting that her advice had contributed towards establishing it.

"You will stay with us, will you not, Miss Mordaunt?" asked the marquis.

"Yes, dear Miss Mordaunt, promise me that you will," demanded his wife.

"Do, dear, dear Miss Mordaunt," lisped the little girl.

"Such kindness is peculiarly grateful to me at this moment," replied Clara, "when weighed down by an imputation so humiliating, so terrible; that you do not shrink from association with a person charged with so degrading a crime, that you do not believe me capable of committing it, is indeed a consolation."

On reaching the residence of Lord Axminster, Clara was welcomed by its owners with cordial kindness; and the marquis, to ease her mind, immediately set off to the police magistrate, to inform him that she was placed under his protection, and that he would offer bail to any amount required for her appearance. The high character of Lord Axminster had its due weight with the worthy magistrate, and it was agreed that Miss Mordaunt should be permitted to remain at Grosvenor-square until the examination, and that, at all events, bail should be accepted for her next day.

No sooner had the Bow-street officer been released from the magistrate's office, than he immediately set off to Clapham-common, and communicated to Abraham Jacob the charge made against Clara.

It would be difficult to express the consternation and chagrin of that excellent man; and, perhaps, on no occasion during a long life, had he ever allowed the external demonstrations of it to be so evident. He was positively angry, and forthwith hastened to London to be on the spot to advise and protect his young friend. It was late in the evening when he reached Grosvenor Square, where the Bow-street officer informed him he would find Clara. He was soon admitted into the library, where, seated between Lord and Lady Axminster, who were offering her all the consolation that friendship could suggest, Clara was listening to her host's statement of the steps necessary to be taken in her case.

Abraham Jacob was received by the Marquis and Marchioness with the cordiality due to an old friend, rather than the ceremony generally practised towards a recent acquaintance; and, as he folded Clara to his heart with all the affection of a near relative, she felt that, with such friends as Providence had raised for her, she ought to support with fortitude the trial that awaited her. And now Clara revealed all that had occurred at the hotel, and had given rise to suspicions so injurious to her, with the motives for her dread of meeting Mr. Marsden. The indignation of Abraham Jacob was strongly excited when he heard of the conduct pursued towards his young friend by Mr. and Mrs. Manwarring.

“And this man and woman have daughters of their own!” said he, “yet could thus behave to an orphan! Verily, they are unworthy to have the blessing of children. The conduct of thee and thine pleaseth me much, friend Axminster; for, truth to say, I looked not for it, considering the short sojourn beneath thy roof, and the abrupt departure from it of Clara, which I attributed not to any fault of hers. I candidly tell thee, notwithstanding, that the maiden refused to say aught that could throw blame on thy family or thee.”

“I was the only one here who did not justly appreciate her,” said the marquis, “but I have learned to do so, and trust, she will remain long enough with us to enable me to prove my high estimation of her qualities.”

“I esteem thy frankness, friend Axminster, and trust thou wilt excuse mine, if I tell thee that the profane music that I heard, when formerly beneath thy roof, pleased me not, and that I trust the voices wedded in unholy song no longer join to soften and effeminate the mind of the young and inexperienced.”

The cheeks of Lady Axminster flushed crimson, nor did her lord's countenance look wholly unmoved, as he hastened to say, that such music no longer was heard in his house; then, as if fearful of wounding the feelings of his wife, he affectionately turned to her, and added,—“though we have less music we have more harmony.”

Notwithstanding the kindness of her friends, Clara trembled while anticipating the examination of next day. To be confronted with witnesses, many of whom believed in her guilt, and to be stared at by strangers, in such painful circumstances, filled her with consternation and dread. Should her innocence not be proved (and what means had she of proving it), what was to become of her? These reflections banished sleep, and not the repeated assurances of the Marquis of Axminster, and Abraham Jacob, that they would accompany her to the examination, and that all would end well, could soothe her agitated spirits. At an early hour Abraham Jacob was busily occupied in instituting a strict search, to discover the person who had committed the theft with which Clara was charged; and in this search the Bow-street officer was of the utmost assistance to him. A reward of five hundred pounds was offered by the good quaker to any one who would reveal the name of the thief, and hand-bills were distributed at every side to notify it.

As a policeman was pasting one of these hand-bills on a wall, a man shabbily dressed asked him what it was about.

“Can't you read it?” said the policeman.

“Then, sure, if I could do that same, it isn't you, nor the likes of you, I'd be axing to tell me. But I suppose you're in the same difficulty as meself, *a-grah*, and can't raide it.”

“There you're mistaken, Mr. Irishman, “for I can read it, and to prove to you that I can, I will read it,” and he did so.

“Arrah! where did you say the robbery took place *acuishla*?”

“At Weller's Hotel, Brook-street.”

“Are you sure?”

“To be sure I am.”

“Why, then faith and thought if ye are, it puts strange thoughts in my head. And when did the robbery take place?”

“Yesterday morning.”

“Be me soul, then, it's I that have a suspicion in my head about who took the money, any way.”

"Tell me what your suspicions are?"

"Is it for a *moodhaun* (1) ye take me? Faith! I'm not such a born *igeot* as all that comes to, neither, as to tell you my suspicion, and let you get the reward."

"Well, then, come to the office and tell it there."

"Arrah! would you be afther bamboozling a body, and making me believe that people are such *moodhauns* as to pay rewards for suspicions? Why, there isn't a man in the world such a blockhead as that, not even the most jealous-pated husband in all Inglind, and I'm tould they're the people that pays the highest prices for suspicions. For didn't a blood relation of my own, a cousin jarmint by the mother's side, get a handful of money from one of 'em, just for telling him a suspicion?"

"Then what will you do?" asked the policeman.

"Do, faith! I'll be after going where I suspects the money is hid, and just make bould to take it away, and bring it to the justice."

"But that will be against the law: you must have a search-warrant, and one of the police to execute it."

"Must have a what? O, *Thonnom mon Dhouil!* was there ever such a counthry as England? So a man can't go and take away stolen goods from the thief, without a search-warrant! And suppose that while I'm going with a cock-and-a-bull story about me suspicions, the thief puts the money away, and I can't find it; what's my suspicions worth then? Will the law, about which all ye English are always bothering one, make the rogue tell where he has put it?"

"No, certainly, the law does not compel any man to criminate himself."

"Ogh! then, bad luck to ye'r law, say I, for sure it's nothing but a humbug. Give me ould Ireland, where every man can take the law into his own hands, and where I would not stand upon much ceremony to go and look for any-thing I had a suspicion wasn't come honestly by."

"Well, but I say, had you not better come with me and get the search-warrant, and then we can go together to the place you suspect."

"Faith! I don't mind if I do; but, remember one thing, don't expect to get a share of the reward, for I won't divide it."

(1) Irish for an idiot.

Ogh! what a dhoole counthry this is, paying rewards for thieves. Be me soul! if they were paid for in ould Ireland, a man might soon make his fortune. Arragh! will you come, and I'll thrate ye to a noggin of whiskey?"

"No; but I have no objection to a pint of porter."

"Now that I thinks of it, faith, I'll not thrust meself into a public-house till afther I've done the job, for once I have the dhrop of the creathur in me it dhrives out all the suspicions, bad and good, and who knows but another might make money of me saycret?"

The policeman accompanied Denis O'Leary, for it was no other than he, and introduced him to the presence of the magistrate, stating, that he believed he could give some information relative to the person who had taken the money from Weller's Hotel.

"Indeed, then, plase your worship's reverence, I can do that same; but before I let the cat out of the bag, as they say in Ireland, I must be entirely alone by myself with your honour."

"There is no occasion for any secrecy here," said the magistrate, "so communicate at once whatever you have got to say."

"Arragh! is it to let some one else get the reward?"

"If your information leads to the detection of the thief, you alone will be entitled to the reward."

"Well, then, plase your reverence, the times being hard with me, I just thought I'd airn a little money to help me on a bit; and so I undertook to carry large baskets of linen, dirty and clane, just as they might be, back and forward from Misthris Selby's, Near Kensington, to Weller's hothel. Oh! says I to myself, Denis O'Leary, if them as come before you could see you dragging dirty linen like a horse, or an ass, what would they say to you?"

"Really, you must come to the point, my good man; I cannot sit here listening to such irrelevant matter."

"Then sure you can stand, if you likes it better, your worship; it's all the same to me."

"You mistake me; I mean that you must not take up my time unnecessarily, but at once state what are your reasons for suspecting that you are acquainted with the thief."

"Then, where was I whin you stopped me? for the devil a bit can I remember a story if people stop me in the middle."

“Can you not state what are your reasons for suspicion, without entering into a history of your thoughts?”

“Thin how can I? Sure, my suspicions are in my thoughts, and I can’t tare ’em asunder.”

“This man really perplexes me!”

“Faith, then, if I may make bould to say so, your worship bothers the brains of me. In half the time I have been answering your reverence’s quare questions, I could have tould you the whole story; yes, faith! and the fight betwixt the two dogs in Park-lane into the bargain, and a more iligent fight I never saw out of Ireland.”

“Will you or will you not state what excited your suspicions?”

“Sure, then, is n’t it that what I’ve been longing to do for the last half hour? and your worship won’t let me.”

“Those Irish are the most provoking people in the world, I do believe.”

“Faith! that’s what many of your countrymen, the purty girls I mean, say to me, when I makes bould to salute ’em under the nose.”

“Well, then, I remember you said that you were hired by a Mrs. somebody.”

“Selby, your worship,” interrupted the policeman.

“Me hired! I’d like to be after seeing the man, woman, or child that would dare to affront me by hiring me. One may hire a sarvant, or a horse, or an ass, but not the like of me. No, your reverence, I said I *undertook*—*undertook* was the word (for any one, even estated gentlemen, may have undertakings)—to convey linen back and forwards from Misthris Selby’s house to Weller’s hothel. ‘And so,’ says she to me, yesterday morning, ‘Mr. O’Leary,’ says she, ‘will you be plased to carry this here basket of linen to that there hothel, and bring back another?’ ‘Well, I don’t mind if I do, for once in a way, Misthris Selby,’ says I. So off we goes; and we talked of diffirent matters as we went along, till we got to Park-lane. And so, says I to her, ‘what strange people ye English are, to be after calling one of the cleanest streets in all London a lane, when a lane is a small dirty narrow place, filled with poor cabins.’ So she up and tells me——”

“I do not wish to know what she told you.”

“Then, faith, your worship is right, for ’t was something mighty impertinent.”

"I must insist on your coming at once to the point."

"Any thing to please your reverence, Well, thin, just as I had a mind to give the ould barge as good as she brought, out runs a dog from a mews, and attacks another dog that was following a man——"

"I insist on your not taking up my time any longer, but come to the point."

"By my soul, your honour will knock it all out of my head with your cross-questions."

"You took the clean linen to the hotel?"

"Is n't it myself that did that same?"

"Did you enter the hotel?"

"Not I; I'd scorn to be going into a place filled with grinning waiters and saucy chaps, as do n't how to spake English. I stood outside the *airy*, amusing meself with watching the quality going past; and sure, and didn't I see a lord from the sweet ould cuntry, and when I said, *long may your lordship live to rain over us*, didn't he put his hand in his pocket, and throw me half-a-crown, and did n't he laugh whin he did so? Arragh! that laugh was worth tin half-crowns, for it just said, you and I came from the ould cuntry, and we understand each other. 'Och, thin, my lord,' says I——"

"I can stand this no longer," said the magistrate, "so I give you notice, that if you again repeat any thing irrelevant to the circumstances connected with the robbery, I shall dismiss you, and you will lose the promised reward."

"Well, your worship, I waited and I waited, till I was as tired as an omnibus horse, or as ever I was when listening to Father Magrath preaching against the dhrink, and he half-seas over himself."

"Will you remember that you have to speak only to facts?"

"And is n't it a well-known fact, plase your worship's reverence, that Father Magrath was——"

"I care not what he was; stick to the business of the theft."

"Ogh! sure and it's yourself that puts everything out of my head, and makes me so bothered that I hardly know what I am saying."

"I must send this man away."

"Sure, aint I coming to the point in a jiffy? Down comes Mistris Selby to the *airy*-door, and 'come down, Mr. O'Leary,' says she, 'and take up this here basket.' Down I goes, and sure the basket was so heavy that I could hardly lift it."

“What has the weight of the basket to do with the robbery?”

“May be, you’d be for thinking that two hundred pounds would n’t be a good weight, in addition to the dirty linen?”

“Did you see the money in the basket?”

“No, I didn’t.”

“Then what is it you mean to say?”

“I mane to say, that says I to Misthris Selby, ‘did you ever hear of such dirty people in all your born days as the English, to be obliged to be changing their linen so often? Now, in ould Ireland, the people are so clane that they only change it once a-week.’”

“I really begin to lose patience, and can stand this man no longer.”

“Sure, thin, I beg your worship’s pardon, and no offence, for I see your honour’s of the same mind as meself and my countrymen; that is, you’re clane, for I see you do not change your linen every day, and you’re in the right of it; for what’s the good of it when a body is n’t dirty?”

“I now tell you, for the last time, that if you again quit the subject of the robbery, you shall be dismissed from the office; and I will send a search-warrant to Kensington, by a Bow-street officer, who will soon discover the dwelling of the laundress.”

“Ogh, murdher! murdher! would your reverence be afther picking my pocket, or taking the bread out of my mouth?”

“Will you, then, once for all, confine yourself to facts?”

“I shall, I shall; and I won’t tell a word of what she said to me on the road, nor what I said to her, though, troth! some of it was mighty dhrole; nor I won’t tell how flurried she was, nor how she kept changing colour, like a drake’s neck in the sun, only she was from red to white, instead of from purple to green; nor how she stopped at the ‘Hand and Flower,’ and took a dhrop of brandy, and gave me another; nor how, whin we got into her house, how she took out of the middle of the basket a silk handkerchief, folded tightly up, and locked it carefully into a tay-chest in a cupboard; nor how I thought to myself, that’s the money for the washing that she has put up so carefully there. But thin, as I sat resting meself, and wiping my face, which was terrible hot, I sees her put her hand into her pocket, and draw out a leather purse, out of which she took three gold shiners and some silver, and gave me two shillings, Thin it came into my

head to be curious about what she had been locking into the tay-chest. So I asked her a question. 'You must make a mint of money, Misthris Selby,' said I. 'Not so much as you might think, Mr. O'Leary,' says she, 'for here's all I've hairn'd by a week's hard work;' and she laid the three sovereigns and ten shillings on the table. Thin it was not her earnings she locked up in the tay-chest, says I to meself; and so I was curious to know what it was, but I knew she was not a woman to answer questions, so I asked none. And then I stepped into the Hand and Flower, and spint the half-crown the Irish lord gave me, in dhrinking his health, as in honour bound; and then it all wint out of me head, clear and clane, and I thought no more of it, till this good man here read the hand-bill, and I saw that Weller's hothel had been robbed; and thin the flurry of Misthress Selby, and the little parcel in the silk handkerchief, locked up so carefully in the tay-chest, came into my mind, like a flash of lightning coming through a chimney, when no one expected it, and so that's the whole story; and I'd bet a noggin of whiskey against a glass of gin, that the stolen money will be found in that same tay-chest, in the cupboard."

The search-warrant was delivered to the policeman, who, with another of the same profession, conducted by Denis O'Leary, soon arrived at a small cottage, in a narrow lane, off the Kensington road. This was the abode of Mrs. Selby, the laundress, with whom O'Leary seemed well acquainted, for he addressed her in a friendly tone. The policemen remained outside for a few minutes, and, when they entered, the change in the countenance of Mrs. Selby denoted that their presence alarmed her, though she endeavoured to assume a composure she was far from feeling. When they informed her of their business, her fright and agitation became visible.

"What right have you to search my house," demanded she, with a tremulous voice, "when it is well known that the thief has been discovered? Why, I was at the hotel last night, and the chambermaid told me how a young woman was caught coming out of the gentleman's room who was robbed, and that she had been concealed there for an hour. This is surely proof enough: then why should a poor hard-working woman, like myself, who have nothing but my good name, and my hands, be suspected in this manner?"

"Sure, Mistress Selby, its all the plainer and surer your

honesty will be made, when every place is searched and nothing at all found ; so don't be afther fretting yourself, *Cuisha ma chree*, but show those gintlemen every hole and corner of the *tiniment*."

"I don't want none of your hadvice, you great nasty drunken dolt of a Hirishman," answered the laundress, an incipient doubt crossing her mind that Denis O'Leary was, in some way or other, connected with the domiciliary visit of the police.

The officers now produced the warrant, and unceremoniously commenced a search, during which the laundress betrayed evident symptoms of fear ; but her agitation became increased to terror when, after having visited the cupboard, they demanded the key of the tea-chest. Mrs. Selby refusing to deliver it, asserting it was lost, it was soon forced open, when the silk handkerchief containing the notes, amounting to 200*l.*, were found, to her no small consternation, and to the infinite satisfaction of Denis O'Leary, who jumped for joy, danced, sang snatches of Irish songs, and vowed he would return to his native land, and live like a fighting cock for the rest of his days. Mrs. Selby was hurried away to the office, to be committed to prison, muttering curses on the "wicked Hirishman," who had brought her into all her trouble.

"Well, now, if that does not bait Bannagher and Ballinaslow !" said Denis O'Leary. "Arragh ! was it I, ye crathur of the world, that tould you to turn out a tief ? Sure, was not it your robbing the people, that has brought you into throuble, ye baste, and not me ? Faith ! ye reminds me of my ould friends in Ireland, that blames the whiskey for every thing bad they do, just as if it was the whiskey that ran afther them, instead of them running afther the whiskey. Keep a civil tongue in yer head, ye baste, and who knows but I'll save you yet ; don't I know a lad that lives at the Seven Dials, who, for a pound note, will swear you were fifty miles off, fast asleep in your bed when the money was taken ? He's the fellow for swearing a yellow boy, (1) any how, and will bother any judge or jury in all Ireland, let alone England, where they're not half so cute."

Abraham Jacob was at the police-office when Denis O'Leary arrived there with Mrs. Selby and the officers.

"I've got the money ! Arragh, success to ould Ireland ! This is a blessed day any way. Little did I think, Denis

(1) Alibi.

O'Leary, that it's yourself would be masther of five hundred pounds in this world, whatever I might be in the nixt. Here's the woman that took the money; more power to her elbow! It's a pity her mother hadn't twins of her, she's so handy."

When Abraham Jacob heard the assertion of the discovery of the thief, and that the money was found in her house, he felt so overjoyed that he betrayed much more demonstration of delight than was consistent with his profession.

"Well done, ould boy!" said Denis O'Leary, "faith! and 'tis yourself that's the wet quaker, to be grinning for all the world like a Kilkenny cat, instead of *theeing* and *thouing* it, and turning up your eyes like a duck in thunder. Well done, ould broad brim!"

Even the coarse observations of Denis O'Leary could not check the external marks of satisfaction of the worthy Abraham Jacob; but when the magistrate, having counted over the notes, told him that there was no occasion for the young lady to appear at the office, and expressed his deep regret at the annoyance to which she had been subjected, he hurried out, and calling a coach, entered it with an activity to which he had long been a stranger, and, urging the coachman to drive as fast as possible, reached the door of Lord Axminster's residence just as the carriage of that nobleman was driving up to convey him and Clara to the police office. Clara's face was pale as marble when her kind friend entered the room where she was seated with Lord and Lady Axminster, who were endeavouring to console her; but no sooner did her eyes meet the joyous glance of Abraham Jacob, than she felt that he was the bearer of good news.

"Thy innocence is made manifest, dear maiden," said he; "the stolen money is found, and the thief is in custody." And he pressed the trembling girl in his arms; a tear from his cheek mingling with hers, as she sank, fainting, into the chair whence she had wildly risen when he entered.

The joy of the Marquis and Marchioness of Axminster was scarcely less than that of Abraham Jacob; and it would be difficult to find three persons in a higher state of satisfaction than those now surrounding the still trembling Clara, who, recovered from the faintness that had overpowered her, could hardly believe that the degrading charge under which her spirit had been tortured during the last few hours—hours that seemed to comprise whole days—had passed away.

"Thou must accompany me to Clapham, my child," said

Abraham Jacob, when Clara was restored to something like composure.

“Pray, leave her with me, I entreat you?” asked the Marchioness.

“Do, friend Abraham,” joined the Marquis, “for as a friend, and an esteemed one, I must ever consider you.”

“I thank thee, truly,” replied Abraham, “and I value thy esteem, but Clara requires repose, and Rachael impatiently expects her. Thou and thy fair wife, for verily she is comely, shall be welcome to my home, where, if thou findest no gilded ceilings, no hangings of satin and velvet, thou wilt find quiet and good-will.”

Gladly would Clara have returned to Clapham, but the fear of again encountering Clarence Seymour’s altered manner and stern regard, caused her to shrink from it. Something of this reluctance was visible to Abraham, but he mistook the cause, and, attributing it to Clara’s desire of not being a burthen on his bounty, he took her hand and said—

“Remember, maiden, that henceforth I consider thee as my child; yea, verily, I will be unto thee as a father. Ever since thou first became an inmate of my dwelling, I wished thee not to quit it for the home of strangers. I yielded to thy desire to leave us against my judgment and my affection, and against that of my dear Rachael. Thou has suffered enough by the unkindness to which thou hast been exposed; thy fame, thy life itself, might have been the sacrifice; but now I assert over thine actions the right of a parent, and my home shall be thine, until thou shalt enter that of thy husband. I announce to thee, before those kind friends, that I will render thee independent of any future exertions on thy part, to earn thy subsistence, and will never again hear of thy going out as a governess.”

It would be vain to attempt to express the heartfelt gratitude of Clara, and she knew that any effort to do so would offend, rather than please, Abraham Jacob. Still she looked forward with dread to a meeting with Clarence Seymour, but could not bring herself to acknowledge her feelings to the good quaker, consequently could offer no excuse for not accompanying him to Clapham, and therefore consented to do so. She left not Grosvenor-square without receiving every mark of affectionate respect from its owners, who declared their intention of paying her a visit in a couple of days.

"Come when thou wilt," said Abraham Jacob, to the Marquis of Axminster, "and thou wilt be welcome, for verily I like thee and thine, though I deemed not I should learn to esteem those from whom Clara parted so soon, and so abruptly."

Arrived at Clapham, Rachael was at the door impatiently waiting for her father; and her joy at beholding her friend Clara was unspeakable. They had hardly been seated, when Clarence Seymour arrived, little suspecting that the person dearest to him on earth, and who occupied all his thoughts, was beneath the roof of Fairlawn. When he entered the room unannounced, as was his wont in the unceremonious dwelling of his friend, Clara's pale cheeks became suffused with blushes, but, schooled by her maidenly pride, she concealed her emotion, and they quickly resumed their pallid hue.

"You have been ill—suffering, Miss Mordaunt," said Clarence, forgetting, in the interest and anxiety awakened by her altered looks, all the coldness and reserve he had decided on evincing if they ever again met.

"I have been—" and Clara's trembling lips denied the power of finishing the sentence; for, overpowered by witnessing his emotion, she burst into tears.

"Good Heavens!—Clara—dear Clara! Miss Mordaunt, I mean to say, tell me why are you thus agitated? What has occurred? Yet no, do not speak, you are ill—drink a little of this," and he seized a glass of water from the table, and put it to her lips.

Clara, feeling it impossible to repress her tears, rose, and accompanied by the good and gentle Rachael, left the room, but not before she had recovered sufficient self-control to look the thanks she could not speak to Clarence, who eagerly offered his arm to assist her to her chamber; and, in spite of all his former resolutions, resigned not her's until it had been gently pressed to his heart.

On returning to the study of Abraham Jacob, that excellent man informed him of all that had occurred to Clara, which produced such an effect on him, that thrown completely off his guard, in a transport of excitement, he avowed that he loved her more than life, and that he had, previously to her entering Mr. Manwarring's house, determined on laying his hand and fortune at her feet."

"And what hindered thy doing so, friend Clarence?" demanded Abraham Jacob.

“Miss Mordaunt’s refusal to explain a circumstance that pained and mortified me; a circumstance I would not, could not have believed, had I not beheld the proof.”

“As I consider Clara as if she were my daughter, I think I have a right to call on thee to explain the circumstance.”

Clarence Seymour now related his having seen the letter addressed to her at his club, by one of the most dissolute young men in London,—his having asked her if the writer had made honourable proposals to her, and her having stated that her acquaintance with him never exceeded a bow, but leaving the circumstance of the letter unexplained.”

“That is very unlike the general frankness of Clara,” said Abraham Jacob; “nevertheless thou knowest, Clarence, that a man, and particularly such a one as he whom thou hast described, would be very capable of writing a letter to a young maiden, though never encouraged by her to do so, and that the natural modesty of the sex, joined to a dread of embroiling thee in a quarrel, might make her decline entering into the subject.”

“It may be so; and, oh! if it should, how shall I ever forgive myself for doubting her truth—her delicacy—her virtue? I am wretched when I reflect that it was this doubt that prevented my asking her hand, and that she had accepted it, she would not have been exposed to the cruel insult that occurred.”

“Love is a strange and (I begin to think) a very selfish passion, friend Clarence. Yet the love I bore the mother of my Rachael was not so. I could no more have doubted her truth than I could that of my child. But thinkest thou, Clarence, that this maiden loves thee?”

“I would fain hope that she is not quite indifferent to the affection I have manifested towards her.”

“Yea, verily—I now begin to understand the cause of the emotion I have sometimes remarked in her; and I tell thee, Clarence, it was not well in thee, with this hope, to let thy foolish suspicions or jealousy prevent thy demanding the hand of Clara, when thou didst meet her beneath my roof.”

“You cannot blame me half so much, my good friend, as I blame myself; but my fault shall be repaired before I sleep; and let me claim your good offices, to induce her to become mine.”

The letter addressed to Clara by Lord Axminster, when the marchioness had confessed to him all that she owed to her, was found by Clara at Clapham, and its perusal deeply affected her, to find a proud man, old enough to have been her father, acknowledging his heartfelt obligations to her, and demanding her pardon, touched her sensibly; and the sweetest tears she ever shed were those which fell from her eyes, as she read this testimony of the good produced by her humble but successful endeavours.

Abraham Jacob would not permit Clarence Seymour to see or write to Clara, until her nerves had been soothed by a refreshing night's sleep. But the next day he engaged Rachael in a long walk, and left Clarence to plead his suit.

Never had Clara looked so lovely as when Abraham Jacob, rising to leave the room in which he had been seated with her and her lover, told her that, as her father and guardian, he had promised his friend Clarence an hour's uninterrupted conversation with her.

Her cheeks covered with blushes, and her heart throbbing with emotion, she rose to go also; but Clarence seized her hand, led her back to her chair, and poured out all the love with which his heart had long been overflowing. Nor did she listen unmoved, or refuse to acknowledge that he was dear to her, though she urged the disparity in their fortunes as a motive for withholding the hand he sought. But Clarence pleaded so eloquently, and her heart aided his eloquence so powerfully, that she at length yielded to his solicitations, only exacting a promise that she should not be called on for the performance of her engagement for three months, the period at which the external trappings of her mourning for her aunt would expire.

"You have not asked me to explain the circumstance of Lord Francis Carysfort having written to me," said Clara, with an expression almost approaching to archness in her beautiful face.

"Name it not, my dear, my own Clara," replied Clarence Seymour. "I want to know nothing but that you will be mine, and unreluctantly so."

"The motives of my reserve on that point were not personal," continued she, "or be assured the secret would have readily been communicated to you. He sent a letter for another, under cover to me, without my sanction, without my

knowledge. I never permitted a second letter to pass through my hands; and, when you lately asked me to explain his having written to me, I did not think myself at liberty to tell you what I have now revealed."

Love-speeches, however interesting to lovers, are little so to readers: we will therefore spare ours from a repetition of the ardent declarations of affection made by Clarence Seymour, and the timid expressions of reciprocity with which they were returned by Clara.

When Abraham Jacob came back from his walk, the happy faces of his young friends announced that their private conference had been highly satisfactory to both. He heartily congratulated them, and evinced a gratification at the happy prospects before them, scarcely less warm than if Clara had been indeed his own child.

The next day brought the Marquis and Marchioness of Axminster to Clapham-common, where they made the acquaintance of Clarence Seymour, and were informed by Abraham Jacob of the engagement entered into with him by Clara.

"It is an attachment of some standing, at least on his side," said Abraham, in reply to an observation made by the marquis on the suddenness of the engagement. "Clarence is rich, yea, verily, the possessor of unbounded wealth, though his habits of life are so simple that it appeareth not. He oweth this simplicity to me, I am fain to believe; for much of his recreation time, from school and college, was passed here."

"Is he any relative to Lord Seymourville?" asked the marquis; "for the name Clarence Seymour is also his."

"He is first cousin, but they are not on friendly terms; for the dissipated habits of him thou hast named have led to nearly a total alienation."

"Does Mr. Seymour know of the accident that has befallen his cousin?"

"I will even ask him, friend Axminster."

Clarence did *not* know of it, and heard the tidings with regret. A fall from his horse the day before had occasioned a concussion of the brain, and little hopes were entertained of his recovery.

Clarence Seymour being next heir to the title and estates, which, owing to the extravagance of their present possessor, were in a most dilapidated condition, heard not this intel-

ligence without reflecting on the probability that he would soon be called from his comparatively obscure but happy state, to the peerage; a change involving new and serious duties, and compelling a much less retired life.

Clara learned the news of Lord Seymourville's danger with regret. Ignorant of the connexion in which Clarence stood to him, she felt alarm instead of complacency, in the notion of his being elevated to a rank for which, when supposed to be the heiress of great wealth, she had never indulged a wish, but from which she now shrank with dread, believing that the publicity attached to such a position would draw unpleasant observations on the disparity of her station and that of the future Lord Seymourville. Known to many persons as having filled the situation of governess, in families whence she had been abruptly dismissed, and known to some twenty or thirty persons as having been made a prisoner on a charge of theft, how could she hope that so degrading a circumstance could be long concealed, or how bear, without dismay, the notion that it would be viewed as a stain on him whose rank she was to share? Clarence Seymour quickly read in her expressive face the painful reflections that were passing in her mind, and with all a lover's tenderness endeavoured to remove them.

Clara felt that she ought not to marry Clarence in case he became Lord Seymourville, and that though the sacrifice of his hand would be a heavy blow to her peace, it was her duty to make it. The faces of the lovers, so lately beaming with satisfaction, were now overcast with sadness; for though Clarence determined not to yield to what he considered the overstrained notions of delicacy in Clara, and never to resign her hand, he foresaw that he should have much difficulty in conquering her objections. To have an obstacle to his happiness thus interposed, when he believed it secure, was more than he had equanimity to bear patiently; and, unlike most heirs to high rank, he heartily wished that his cousin might live many years, and leave a son to fill his peerage, rather than have the sensitive delicacy of Clara wounded by the fears that her accession to rank would draw censorious animadversion on events that had already too much distressed her.

The affectionate cordiality evinced by Lord and Lady Axminster towards Clara was highly gratifying to her and her kind friends at Clapham; a better proof of which could not be given than by the consentment of Abraham Jacob, that Ra-

chael and himself should accompany Clara on a visit to Axminster House, where, whenever it took place, Clarence promised to join them. The marquis and marchioness returned to London highly pleased with the beautiful villa of the good quaker, and not less so with the circle assembled there.

The next day brought the news of the death of Lord Seymourville, and his successor was obliged to go to London, and superintend the ceremony, which it was now his place to order. Never did any one feel so little satisfaction as the present lord in his accession of title, and when Clara addressed him as Lord Seymourville, he thought that there was a coldness, a formality in the sound, that rendered it very inharmonious to his ears.

As they sat at an open window at Clapham, a few days after, Clara was startled by a voice, whose tones recalled many painful feelings to her mind.

“Why, thin, I tell you I *will* see the young lady, and nobody *shall* hinder me,” said the voice of Denis O’Leary, to the sober and staid man servant of Abraham Jacob, who was endeavouring to prevent his entrance. “For what do ye take me, man alive? Arrah! don’t ye see I’m a responsible man?”

Though now habited in a very different style to that in which she had seen him in the house of her aunt, Clara quickly recognised Denis O’Leary; and the recollection of the death of that dear relative, associated in her memory with the Hibernian, came back as vividly as if it only occurred a few days before.

“Why, ye *baste*, don’t stand there *theeing* and *thouing* me, but raide this,” and he thrust a newspaper into the face of the servant.

“I tell thee, friend, thou canst not see the maiden; but thou mayest see her guardian, even him to whom this house belongeth.”

When Clara saw Denis O’Leary furling the newspaper with an air of authority, some undefined dread of evil seized her.

“O Clarence!” said she, “what new insult, what new trial awaits me?—that man is surely the bearer of some intelligence to wound me. See, he holds a newspaper. Is my name not already sufficiently degraded, that it must now be dragged through this publicity? And you, Clarence, would compel one so humiliated, so exposed to fresh insults, to become your wife?”

Abraham Jacob, who had been in the garden, now entered the room, and immediately went and spoke to Denis O'Leary.

"I'm right glad to see you again," said Denis; "faith! you're the boy that made a man of me; yes, faith, and a gentleman too, if it be true that fine feathers makes fine birds. Did you ever see a betther cut of a coat?" (and he turned himself round to show it), "and as for the waistcoat and t'other things, what do ye say to them? Arragh! look here, here's a watch for ye," (pulling out a silver one of the largest dimensions.) "Sure, didn't they want to make me buy a bit of a thing that was no bigger than a child's watch, and that a body couldn't hear tick at ten yards distance; but I tould 'em that an Irishman liked *tick*, and that I'd rather have a watch as big as a turnip, than twenty of them nonsensical things they showed me. Look at the hat, and the boots, and the cravat, and tell me honestly, did you ever see betther? Haven't I spent your money genteelly, and like a man, and aren't you proud of me? Faith, there isn't the likes of me to be seen any where at this side of the herring-pond, I can tell you; and that's what the crethurs of women tell me every day."

"But what dost thou want, friend?"

"What do I want? faith, I want to see a young lady as was niece to an ould lady that died at Kensington. The ould one's name was Waller; but I don't know the name of the niece. All I know is, that she came to your house from Kensington when the ould one died, and if I could get at the speech of her, it would be a great day for me."

"Tell me thy business; thou knowest I will not deceive thee."

"Why then, by my soul, I believe ye; for ye came down with the shiners handsomely, that you did, when I found out the thief. And sure it's to find out something or somebody now, that I'm come here; and, be me soul! when I heard that the young lady was at your house, I thought it would bring me luck. See here, man alive, here's what brought me down," and he reached the paper to Abraham Jacob, who read as follows:—

"Any one who can give information where Mrs. Waller, lately residing at Kensington, may be found, or, if deceased, where her next of kin may be heard of, will be handsomely rewarded, by applying at the office of Messrs. Turner and Boxall, No. 17, Lincoln's Inn."

“Now you understand *why* I want to see the young lady, for I’m purty shure *she’s* the nixt of kin. Shure, I was taking a dhrop in a public house when I heard a man raiding this, and I gave him a shilling for the paper, and made my way to Kensington; where, with asking one person and another, I discovered that the niece of the ould lady was taken to the house of a quaker gintleman at Clapham Common, of the name of Jacob. Ogh, ho! says I to meself, won’t I soon be there, and earn this reward? let me alone for finding out a *saycret*. So off I started, and here I am; so now let me see the young lady. Shure, and it’s meself that would know her among a hundred, for I never forget the face of a purty girl; and, faith, I took a good look at her when I saw her at the house of the ould lady at Kensington.”

Abraham Jacob hastened to relieve Clara’s mind from the alarm into which the sight of Denis O’Leary had thrown her; and then, having assured Denis that Miss Mordaunt was a resident in his house, suffered him to depart, with the happy certainty of securing the promised reward.

“Good luck to you, my ould boy!” said O’Leary. “You see I’m the lad for finding out things: nothing can escape me. Be me soul! I’ll thry and find out the *saycret* of *perpaytual* motion; for I heard that whoever discovered it would get a reward; and if it’s to be discovered, who so likely as me to find it out?”

Various were the conjectures of the circle at Clapham that evening, as to what the advertisement meant; and at an early hour next morning, Abraham Jacob was at the office of Messrs. Turner and Boxall, in Lincoln’s Inn.

Denis O’Leary had been already there, fearful of being forestalled in the intelligence he had to give; and, the moment he saw Abraham Jacob, he cried out to him, “Here I am, and here I’ve been since daylight this morning! Would you believe it, this office wasn’t opened till eight o’clock, and I had been sitting on the steps since four.”

The solicitors now informed Abraham Jacob that a large fortune had been bequeathed to Mrs. Waller by her brother, a General Bertie, in the East India Company’s service; and in default of her dying without issue, it was to descend to her nearest relative, with the condition annexed of taking his name.

Having perused the will of General Bertie, Abraham Jacob returned to Clapham Common with the unexpected news that

Clara was now the possessor of immense wealth; a piece of intelligence that relieved her mind from the apprehension of having Lord Seymourville's alliance with her commented on as unsuitable. The change of name, too, was gratifying to her, as sinking the one by which she had been known in situations where insults had been offered, and humiliations endured, not through any fault of hers, but from the unkindness of others.

"I did not think, dearest Clara, that you were so proud," said Lord Seymourville to her, when some observation of hers, in this sense, was made. "Ought I not to be offended that you are more disposed to give the rich heiress to me than the poor Clara Mordaunt? But, remember, it was with the *Governess* I fell in love, and not the wealthy Miss Bertie."

"Never shall I forget it; but I pray you, too, not to forget that it was Clarence Seymour to whom I so readily gave my hand, and not Lord Seymourville."

"You don't mean to say, Clara, that you will not as readily give it to me now?" and the lover looked half alarmed.

"Quite as readily," answered Clara; and she placed her hand in his. Clara, now mistress of a large fortune, forgot not the services of Betsey, the former nursery-maid at Mr. Williamson's. A note, addressed to her at the residence of that gentleman, being returned from the dead letter office, with the usual form, that no such person was to be found, Abraham Jacob, to whom Clara expressed her regret on the subject, proposed, with a smile on his face while he made it, to employ Denis O'Leary. "Verily," said he, "the man is enterprising and active, and though he does (it must be confessed) take round-about ways to effect his object, he nevertheless succeeds."

To Denis O'Leary, then, was confided the task of discovering Betsey, an occupation he undertook with no little satisfaction, though the reward offered was not so great as might be deemed gratifying to one who had lately received such large ones.

"Only see if I don't find her," said Denis, "if she is above-ground; yes, faith, or if she is under-ground either. If she's alive, I'll bring her here; and if she's dead, I'll bring her tombstone to prove it; and what more can I do? But, tell a body, is she a taking girl?"

"Why, what dost thou mean by that phrase? she is said to

be respectable, modest, and warmhearted, and well to look upon, withal," replied Abraham Jacob.

"Why, then, God help you, you're a simple man, afther all, not to know what I main by a taking girl. Shure, it's a thief I main."

A week had not elapsed before Denis O'Leary returned to Clapham-common, accompanied by Betsey, whose joy at again seeing her "dear Miss Mordaunt" was inexpressible.

"Didn't I tell you I'd find her?" said Denis, "and maybe, it's the worst job I ever did in my life; for, 'pon me soul, if she won't marry me, I'll never be happy again."

"Don't go for to talk such nonsense as that," said Betsey, "when you never saw me till yesterday."

"Arragh! and so much the betther for me, for shure, the longer I'd known you, the more miserable I'd be in case you won't have me."

"O! you Hirishmen are always so flattersome! That's just the way the under-butler at Mr. Williamson's used to talk, and I was so foolish as to think of marrying him whenever we had saved enough; and hasn't he been so false as to marry the old housekeeper at Mr. Williamson's, since I left, and all for her money?"

"Arragh, *cuishla machree*! I'm the boy that will never *decaive* you, and am ready to make you Mistris O'Leary to-morrow, or to-day for the matther of that; and I've got plinty of money, as Mistrer Jacob himself can tell you; and I'll swear against the dhrink, and be as steady a boy as any in the parish."

Truth to say, Betsey seemed not insensible to the passion of Denis, sudden as it had been, and she promised to reflect on his proposal. Clara settled a pension on her for life that secured her a moderate competence; and never was gratitude more warm or sincere than that with which this unexpected gift was received.

Lord and Lady Axminster now claimed the fulfilment of the promise made by the circle at Clapham Common, to visit them at Axminster Park. A more than ordinary pressure of business, occasioned by being, at her request, appointed Clara's trustee and guardian, prevented Abraham Jacob from being of the party; so the marquis and marchioness came for her, and conducted her to their residence, where Lord Seymourville soon after joined them. A large party of distinguished

guests assembled at the mansion some days after, to attend the races at Ascot, which was only a few miles off. The beauty and graceful elegance of Miss Bertie were the universal theme of admiration, and though both were pre-eminent, they were perhaps viewed with a more profound sense of appreciation, from the fact being generally known, that she was considered one of the richest heiresses in England; a circumstance that greatly enhances the charms of ladies, in the eyes at least of single men, and their friends and relatives. But when it was announced that the beautiful heiress was soon to be the bride of Lord Seymourville, there was no end to the comments made on his good luck in discovering this treasure before it had been viewed by others, who might have become successful competitors for her hand.

When Clara saw herself again the courted and admired heiress, with what different feelings did she receive the homage offered to her. *Then*, she doubted not the sincerity of the professions made to her, nor her own merit to excite them; but *now*, though still in the bloom of youth, she had acquired so severe a lesson in the school of adversity, that if she had been taught to doubt the truth of others, she had also learnt to form a more humble estimation of herself. The humility engendered by her trials gave to her manner a more winning charm, and to her countenance a milder sweeter expression, than when, in her father's house, the petted idolized heiress. Her beauty was considered beyond compare. Her affianced husband was envied by all; and many remarked, that so rich a girl had no need to be so handsome.

The day the cup was to be run for, Clara was persuaded to accompany the party to Ascot, and when seated by the side of the Marchioness of Axminster in the stand, surrounded by a brilliant circle of the nobility, her eye met the eager and spiteful glances of Mrs. Manwarring, who was whispering her husband. Clara felt the colour rise to her face; for the sight of this unamiable couple recalled the painful and humiliating trial to which she had been exposed at their dwelling. She told Lady Axminster of the circumstance, and that lady named it to her lord, who stood close to his wife and her friend, in order to check any rudeness from the Manwarrings.

"It is—it *positively* is Miss Mordaunt," said Mrs. Manwarring to her spouse. "Well, who'd have thought of seeing her again, and in such company? Why, she's *positively* whisper-

ing and laughing with the marchioness, as if they were equals; and see!—only look!—if there is not the marquis, with all his pride and dignity, drawing her shawl over her shoulders, and treating her for all the world as if she was a duchess. How can she have got out of prison?”

“Perhaps she never got into one, Mrs. Manwarring.”

“You don’t mean to say that, after seeing her taken prisoner and carried away by two Bow-street officers, she could avoid being taken to prison?”

“I mean that she might, on examination, have been found innocent, Mrs. Manwarring.”

“A likely story, indeed! Now I advise you, unless you wish to get yourself into a scrape, Mr. Manwarring, to go and tell the marquis all we know of this person, whom he is treating as if she were a queen. Truth may be blamed, but cannot be shamed; and what would be said or thought, Mr. Manwarring, if she steals something from Axminster Park, and it comes out we concealed what we knew of her? Why, bless me, only look at all the grandees about her, paying their court to her: I have no patience with such a minx.”

“So I see, Mrs. Manwarring; but what’s it to me if she steals any thing from Axminster park? I didn’t recommend her there, and am not answerable.”

“That’s so *like you*,—always selfish, Mr. Manwarring.”

“I like *your* talking of selfishness, Mrs. Manwarring. Whoever was half so selfish as you—I should like to know?”

“This is neither the time nor place to discuss that point. Remember that the Marquis of Axminster is Lord Lieutenant of the county, the person the most influential in it, Mr. Manwarring, and that if he should discover that you knew that a young woman who had been taken up for theft—ay! Mr. Manwarring, taken prisoner in *your house*, before your face, was received in *his*, without your informing his lordship of the circumstance, he would have just cause to complain. Go, therefore, and tell him. You may add something civil about our respect for him and the marchioness, which prevented your concealing what you consider so important a fact.”

“I don’t half like going to speak to him before all those London grandees. He always looks so proud and formal, that I don’t much like it.”

“I do assure you, that you ought on the contrary, Mr. Man-

warring, to be glad of an excuse for going up to speak to him here, when all the people of any distinction, or pretension to distinction, are present. It will look well for you to be seen speaking to him, for I know it *has* been remarked how little notice the Axminsters take of us; besides, who knows what this may lead to? They may, out of gratitude, invite us to dine at the park, and think what a triumph that would be, Mr. Manwarring."

"Well, for once, I'll take your advice, Mrs. Manwarring;" and off he walked towards the stand, his wife extending her neck forwards, and straining her eyes to observe his movements. He dispatched a servant to request the marquis to grant him a short audience.

Lord Axminster's countenance wore an expression of more than ordinary sternness, and his mien had assumed more than its usual dignity, as he coldly bowed to Mr. Manwarring, whom he joined on the landing-place of the stairs of the stand.

Though annoyed at the coldness of his reception, this latter gentleman anticipated with no little self-complacency the change likely to be effected in the manner of the marquis, when rendered master of the secret he had to impart; and this gave him confidence to put on an air of ease, which he was far from feeling.

"You wished to speak with me, I believe, sir," said the marquis.

"Yes, my lord marquis; I have a painful, but an imperative, duty to discharge."

The marquis waited a minute or two in silence, while Mr. Manwarring hemmed, used his pocket handkerchief, cleared his throat, and at length proceeded. "There is a young person in the stand with the Marchioness of Axminster, my lord,—may I take the liberty of inquiring her name?"

"Her name, sir," and the marquis drew himself up with increased *hauteur*, "is Miss Bertie."

"Ah! my lord, I see you are imposed on—yes, my lord, *dreadfully* imposed on. That young person's name is Mor-daunt; she was engaged as governess in my family; but that is not the worst of it, my lord marquis. That young person was taken prisoner in my house;—yes, my lord, in my house,—in this very county where your lordship is lord-lieutenant,—taken prisoner, my lord, for robbery. Your lordship, or the marchioness, of course, could not be aware of this circum-

stance, or this Miss Bertie, as she calls herself, could not be an inmate of Axminster Park?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, the Marchioness of Axminster and I were perfectly aware of the circumstance."

"*Indeed*, my lord!"

"Yes, Mr. Manwarring, we were informed of the whole affair, and by Miss Bertie herself."

"Then why the change of name? that surely is strange?"

"Not at all, sir; Miss Mordaunt that was has assumed the name of Bertie, in compliance with the will of an uncle of that name."

"I really—that is—I must confess, my lord, that as your lordship and the marchioness were informed of this young person's being a thief, I am surprised, I may say, *greatly* surprised, my lord, to find her seated by the marchioness in so public a situation."

"You mistake, sir—greatly mistake; we were *not* informed that the lady in question was a thief, and I am surprised you could apply such an epithet to any lady who is a friend of ours."

"A thousand pardons, my lord! I never could have dreamt that such a person could be a friend of yours or of the marchioness, but I thought that your lordship admitted that Miss Mordaunt informed you that——"

"Sir, she told us how, rendered an object of suspicion, you denied her the protection to which her situation in your family entitled her, and to which common humanity entitles any female in similar circumstances. It required little discrimination to enable any person to see that a young lady like Miss Mordaunt must be incapable of the crime of which she was suspected. I regret that your conduct in this business, sir, was not such as to merit approbation; but lest you should still harbour a doubt of the probity of one of the most amiable and pure of her sex, I inform you, that fortunately the marchioness and I, who have known and appreciated the noble qualities of Miss Mordaunt, were on our route to London, when we encountered her in the custody of the persons with whom you permitted her to leave your house, and that, shocked and astonished, we took her from them, and conveyed her to our residence in town, and the next day, the money stolen was found in the possession of the thief, who was the laundress at the hotel whence it was taken."

“Indeed, my lord, I feel greatly surprised—confounded, I may say, at this very extraordinary business ; and I—I——”

“Permit me, sir, to observe that I see nothing to surprise or confound in the circumstance that a highly-educated young lady, whose appearance and manners ought to have conveyed a conviction of her innocence, has been proved guiltless of a crime like the one with which she was charged. The surprise and confusion would, I think, Mr. Manwarring, have been more natural if manifested when she was arrested in your house ;” and so saying, Lord Axminster bowed coldly to Mr. Manwarring, and withdrew, leaving that gentleman vexed and mortified at the result of their interview. Whilst it lasted, Mrs. Manwarring had entered into conversation with the two ladies between whom she was seated in a stand, whence she could see the one where the marquis and her husband were speaking. These ladies, though neighbours, bore no feelings of good-will towards her, and she indulged a reciprocity of dislike towards them.

“Mr. Manwarring has gone over to speak to the Marquis of Axminster,” said she, “and on a curious business.”

The ladies evinced no symptoms of curiosity, which rather disappointed her.

“Do you go to the grand fête at Axminster Park on Monday ?” asked one of them.

“I have not quite determined,” answered Mrs. Manwarring. The truth being that she was not asked.

“The fête is to be given in honour of the great heiress, Miss Bertie,” observed the other ; “how very beautiful she is !”

“Her fortune is, I am told, immense,” resumed the first speaker.

“Enormous,” replied the other.

Mrs. Manwarring, anxious to conceal her ignorance of the rich heiress, and all connected with Axminster Park, asked no questions, and willing to show that she also could give information on some point unknown to her neighbours, again referred to the object of Mr. Manwarring’s business with the marquis.

“A very curious event has occurred,” said she. “I engaged a governess sometime ago in London, a Miss Mordaunt, and brought her down in my carriage ; but, would you believe it, ladies, the very evening of my return home, two Bow-street officers arrived and took her prisoner on a charge of robbery, —was not this strange ?”

“Why, if people *will* engage governesses without a strict inquiry into their characters, they cannot be very much surprised if such events occur,” was the reply of one of the ladies.

“You surely cannot imagine that *I* could engage a person without the strictest inquiry,” said Mrs. Manwarring, her cheeks becoming red with anger. “But,” resumed she, “the strangest part of the story is yet to come; for, judge of my astonishment when, on arriving here, the first person I saw was this very identical governess, though how she got out of prison I have not the slightest notion.”

“Probably she was found to be innocent of the charge,” observed one of the ladies.

“O! that I am much inclined to doubt; for certainly her conduct bore every appearance of guilt. The most extraordinary part of the business is, that this very person is now seated by the side of the Marchioness of Axminster in the opposite stand. Yes, ladies,” pointing to Clara with her hand, “there is the very person.”

“Oh! dear, Mrs. Manwarring, you really must excuse our believing this,—you are surely labouring under some strange mistake, for the lady seated by the Marchioness of Axminster is no other than the beautiful and wealthy heiress, Miss Bertie, in honour of whom the great fête is to be given at Axminster Park.”

“It is *you*, madam, who must be labouring under some strange mistake,” said Mrs. Manwarring, her countenance exhibiting every symptom of anger; “for I am perfectly convinced that the person I now see is no other than Miss Mor-daunt, the governess taken prisoner in my house; and what is more, madam, I have sent Mr. Manwarring to acquaint the marquis of the dangerous associate with which the marchioness is at this moment. Nay, there is Mr. Manwarring telling the whole story to him.”

The lady spoken to put up her eye-glass, and saw Mr. Manwarring speaking to the marquis; she saw also the cold and haughty air with which Lord Axminster listened to him, and shrugging her shoulders, and turning up her eyes, in token of her incredulity, she observed—“It appears that the marquis is as little convinced by Mr. Manwarring’s statement, as I confess myself to be by yours, for see how proud and indignant he looks, and now he has bowed Mr. Manwarring out; and

only remark, he has returned to Miss Bertie's side, and is laughing with her and the marchioness."

"Well, *I never—no—never—*knew any thing so strange; yet, nevertheless, madam, my conviction is as strong as ever as to the identity of the person."

"And mine, madame, remains unchanged. Indeed, I think it is no wonder that the marquis treated Mr. Manwarring with such hauteur, considering that he went with such a very improbable tale, and against so distinguished a person, too, as Miss Bertie."

Mrs. Manwarring was about to give an angry rejoinder to this remark, when her husband re-entered the stand, looking not a little vexed and embarrassed.—"These ladies will have it, Mr. Manwarring, that the person opposite, whom *I know* to be Miss Mordaunt, is Miss Bertie, the great heiress."

"Hold your plaguy tongue, will you?" whispered he, "a pretty scrape you have got me into. It is just like you, always doing wrong yourself, and getting others to do so too."

The ladies observed that a disagreeable discussion was taking place, and, convinced that it arose from the mistake of Mrs. Manwarring about the identity of Miss Bertie, indulged in certain malicious smiles at her expense, which so enraged her, that she turned abruptly to her husband and said,—
"Why, surely, you don't pretend to say that the young woman sitting next the marchioness is Miss Bertie?"

"*I do* say it is, and I desire you will hold your tongue on the subject," and off he walked, leaving his wife in no enviable state of mind, her feelings excited into wrath, not less by the smiles of her two female neighbours, than by witnessing the unceasing and affectionate attentions bestowed on Clara by the marquis and marchioness, and their distinguished guests.

Whilst this scene was taking place, another occurred in a neighbouring stand, in which Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mrs. Marsden and her son were seated. Mr. Hercules Marsden having, by the aid of his opera-glass, reconnoitred all the stands, discovered Lord Seymourville in that assigned to the Marquis of Axminster and his guests, and instantly left his party to join him. Mr. Hercules had been making a tour in the country, whence he only returned the previous evening to join his mother at Mr. Williamson's country seat, so that he was in perfect ignorance of Clarence Seymour's accession to a title, as well as of Clara's change of name and fortune.

Ignorant of the usages at races, he attempted to enter the stand of Lord Axminster, but was prevented by the door-keepers, with whom he had an angry debate. "I want to speak to a friend of mine who is in this stand," said he.

"If you tell his name," replied one of the men, "he shall be informed of your wishes."

"His name is Clarence Seymour, and there he is talking to that rum *old un*, Lord Somebody, I forget his name, who looks as stiff as if he had swallowed a poker."

"There is no gentleman of the name of Seymour here."

"I tell you there is, and there he stands," pointing to Lord Seymourville.

"Come, come, sir, you are mistaken; that is Lord Seymourville."

"Why, you infernal fool! do you suppose I don't know a man with whom I am as well acquainted as with any one? Let me pass; I say I *will* pass," and he tried to force an entrance into the stand, but was repelled by the door-keepers.

"There is Mr. Clarence Seymour," exclaimed Mr. Hercules Marsden, in a tone loud enough to be heard by the person named, and who having recognised the speaker, and wishing to avoid him, turned away without vouchsafing him any notice.

Angered by the violence of Marsden, the door-keepers, with one accord, proclaimed that the gentleman pointed out by him was no other than Lord Seymourville; and this intelligence was announced in a tone which indicated their belief that Mr. Marsden was an impostor who affected an acquaintance with a person he did not know. Their pertinacity in asserting that the person pointed out was Lord Seymourville, and not Clarence Seymour, enraged Mr. Marsden so much, that he aimed a blow at one of the men, who quickly returned it with such force, as to make him lose his equilibrium, and the police being called for soon made him their prisoner, and led him off amid the sneers, sarcasms, and grins of the surrounding crowd, from which disagreeable position he was only liberated through the interference of Mr. Williamson.

During the time occupied in this scene, some persons entered the stand in which Mr. and Mrs. Williamson and Mrs. Marsden were seated, and began conversing about the great heiress, as they called Miss Bertie.

"She is certainly one of the richest girls in England," said one; "ay! and one of the prettiest too," remarked the other. These individuals being known to Mrs. Williamson, she enquired which was the heiress?

"That beautiful girl in grey silk, sitting next to the Marchioness of Axminster," was the answer.

Mrs. Williamson put up her glass, looked in the direction pointed out, wiped her glass carefully, looked again, and then said, "you are mistaken; the person in grey is named Mordaunt, and lived in my family as governess."

"I assure you that I am correct, madam; you are probably deceived by some resemblance, for that lady opposite is Miss Bertie."

Unaccustomed to contradiction, and too irascible to conceal her displeasure at it, Mrs. Williamson warmly insisted that the person in grey was Miss Mordaunt, and the two gentlemen also persevered in asserting that it was Miss Bertie.

Mrs. Marsden was now called in to give her opinion, and she, after looking intently through her opera-glass, declared her conviction that the lady in question was no other than Miss Mordaunt.

Lord Seymourville, who entered the stand with Mr. Williamson at this moment, was scarcely allowed to utter the customary questions, before he was appealed to by Mrs. Williamson, to declare if she was not right in pronouncing the person opposite to be Miss Mordaunt. "I know," said she, "that it is, that it can be no other than my *see-de-wong* governess, whom I discharged."

"And I am firmly persuaded that the lady's name is Miss Bertie," observed the gentleman she was arguing with."

"You are both correct," replied Lord Seymourville, "the lady's name *was* Mordaunt, and is now Bertie."

"And *is* she a wealthy heiress,—do tell me?" asked Mrs. Marsden; "for though she would not come and live with me, even when Mrs. Williamson turned her off, still I always liked the pretty little pickaninny, and shall be glad to hear she is rich."

There was so much good-nature in the manner in which this was said, that Lord Seymourville was conciliated, and he replied, "that he believed Miss Bertie had inherited a large fortune from her grand uncle, whose name she had taken."

"She was right," observed Mrs. Williamson, with a super-

cilious smile, "to take any name in preference to retaining the one by which she was known as a flirting coquette."

"She is so soon to take *mine*, madam," answered Lord Seymourville, drawing himself up with an air of cold dignity, "that I must request you will speak less disrespectfully of her."

"And so she will be a lady—a *real* lady?" said Mrs. Marsden. "Well, I vow I rejoice at it, for she was always a pretty, kind, little pickaninny; and now, as you are to be her husband, will you, dear Mr. Seymour—Lord Seymourville, I mean, ask her to let me put her crown, and the rest of the arms, as they are called, on my carriage, for, would you believe it—the lord whose arms I had on it has made the coachmaker take them off, indeed he has; for the harrystockracy are mighty proud about these matters, and won't let any one but themselves put crowns on their carriages."

"I beg you will assure the future Lady Seymourville, of my unfeigned respect and good wishes," said Mr. Williamson. "And tell her," said his wife, "that I hope when she becomes a countess, she will pay us a visit at Mary Park, and bring her friend the marchioness with her."

Nothing now remains to be told, except that the nuptials of Lord Seymourville and Clara were solemnized at the residence of the Marquis of Axminster, in a few weeks after, that the worthy Abraham Jacob acted as the bride's father on the occasion, and that Mrs. Williamson, and the Manwarrings, in future ever treated the governesses who undertook the instruction of their children with more humanity; giving as a reason, that there was no knowing whether they might not, at some future period, become heiresses, or countesses, and so turn out useful acquaintances. Hercules Marsden became fascinated by a coquettish young actress at one of the minor theatres, who flattered him and his doting mother so adroitly, that she soon enacted the part of his wife, and returned with them to Jamaica, where she charms the quadron circles with private theatricals. Denis O'Leary and Betsey are married, and the fair and gentle Rachael continues to be the blessing of her father, and has promised to be that of a young friend, selected by him for his future son.

THE END.

INTRODUCTION.

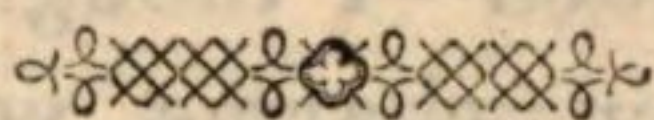
THE
BELLE OF A SEASON.

A POEM.

BELLE OF A SEASON.

THE

INTRODUCTION.



EXPECT not, gentle readers, here to find
Some wild romance—effusion of a mind
Imbued with pictures which dark fancies give,—
My heroine, like yourselves, doth act and live.
No scenes of terror here you'll see pourtray'd,
To shock the feelings of a timid maid ;
No scowling wretches here, with purpose dire,
With dark-laid plots and fiend-like men conspire ;
No women, who, forgetful of their sex,
Yielding to passion's sway, their hearts perplex ;
No tyrant father and no mother cross ;
No gamester desperate with heavy loss ;
No rivals using every wicked art
To rob a damsel of her lover's heart ;
No murderous dagger and no poison'd cup,
To make pale readers full on horrors sup ;
No sinful love here marks its guilty course,
Follow'd by shame, remorse, and a divorce ;
No ruin'd château and no gliding ghost ;
No duel or elopement can we boast
In these poor pages, only meant to show
The scenes of real life, whose truth you know.
My heroine, like yourselves, devoid of art,
Rich in each gift of person, mind, and heart ;

Just such a daughter as all parents prize,
And just as you appear to the fond eyes
Of yours ;—just such a nymph as men adore :
Look in your glass—her image stands before.
The tresses may present a different hue,
The eyes may grey or black be, 'stead of blue ;
More or less *embonpoint* perhaps you'll see ;
But, ne'ertheless, mankind will all agree
That beauties are as sisters like : 'tis true,
When Mary I described—I thought of you.
The same your winning charms, your dimples, smiles,
The same mild virtue that each heart beguiles,
The same your occupations, hopes, and fears,
Your artless gaiety, your ready tears ;
You'll recognize the portrait, I am sure,
Though you deny it with a look demure ;
And thus alike in loveliness and lives,
May you, like Mary, soon be bless'd as—wives !

THE BELLE OF A SEASON.



'Tis noon, and Spring, with genial power,
Hath lent her sunshine to the hour ;
Hath breathed her sweetness through the air
That murmurs o'er the bright parterre ;
On many a forest monarch tall
Hath hung a fresh green coronal ;
The emerald turf hath dress'd anew,
With primrose pale and violet blue ;
And showers of snow-like wind-flowers strown
In many a copse and upland lone ;
Hath heap'd on the laburnum gay
Its gold—its fragrance on the May ;
And balls of silver, rich to see,
Hung o'er the wild wayfaring tree :
No wonder that yon ancient hall
Looks deck'd as for a festival.

Yon ancient hall !—a noble race,
Whose deeds hath History loved to trace,
Spread yonder court and raised that tower,
Whose oriel speaks it Beauty's bower ;
And loved in manhood's youthful pride
Through that oak-planted chase to ride,
Where antler'd roamers browse and play
Throughout the golden summer day ;
And hares, with eyes like gems that burn,
Crouch timid 'mid the rustling fern.

Beyond—a river, clear and blue
As Heaven's own bright cerulean hue,
Winds with a song of pleasant tone
Through many a meadow-valley lone,
Where teeming cows and snowy sheep
Along its flowery border creep—
And soon as peeps the early Spring,
Her merry choir their gladness sing ;
Whose joy but cheers the soft repose
So fair an English landscape knows.

A daughter of that noble race,
With all its beauty in her face,
Looks from yon hall across that scene
Of river bright and meadow green.
I said her face was proudly fair,
But—lovelier far—a heart is there,
Fill'd with o'erflowing love of all
On which her gentle glance doth fall.
Oft have her childhood's feet at dawn
Brush'd its bright dew from yonder lawn ;
And well she knows each shelter'd dell,
And each peculiar tree can tell ;
And every flower before her feet
Is link'd with memories passing sweet.
She little dreams who gazes there
That *she* is far more fresh and fair
Than all the pride of her parterre.
So those the most who charm and bless
Least know their wealth of loveliness !

'T would tame the most malicious sprite
To watch those eyes, so azure bright,
Upon the faëry pleasaunce bent,
With wishes gay as innocent ;
Or mark her, with more serious air,
Tend her flower-darlings rich and rare ;

Or feed the bird, that at her voice
Would in its prison-cage rejoice ;
Or when in other mood she came,
To stoop above her easel's frame,
As true her taper fingers sped,
To trace the scene before her spread ;
Or view her, in green garden nook,
Bend thoughtful o'er some gentle book ;
Or hear when, blithe as bird of spring,
She half unconsciously would sing
A lay like this—O, ne'er again
Those woods will hear so sweet a strain.

SONG.

O Nature ! let me dwell with thee,
The happy playmate of the bee ;
Thou bringest back the golden Spring,—
I cannot choose but gaily sing !

Old Winter's gone with clouds and rain,
And flowers are on the earth again,
And birds fly forth with gladsome wing ;—
I cannot choose but gaily sing !—

The insects chirp as blithe they pass
Among the dew-gemm'd waving grass,
Fresh verdure clothes each fairy-ring ;—
I cannot choose but gaily sing !—

O Nature ! let me dwell with thee ;
Thou ne'er art stern and harsh to see,
But mark'st each day by some bright thing,
That makes thy children gaily sing.

What wonder that a maid like this,
With heart so pure, so full of bliss,

The sternest only named to bless !—
Nay, even her cold staid governess
Forgot her formal rules, and smiled,
As she—half woman, half a child—
Would break her studies grave and long,
With caroll'd snatch of such a song ;
Or fragment of the blithest dance,
That ever sylph had stolen from France ;
Or through the open'd window hie,
To chase the gorgeous butterfly !

Delicious time ! when life is new,
And Pleasure opens wide to view
Her paths of sunshine and of bloom,
That in far distance hide the tomb,
Ere one illusion false is known,
Or one affection chill'd or flown.
O Youth ! how passing fair art thou,
Ere care hath worn that open brow ;
Ere the fresh roses on thy cheek
Sad tears have dew'd—when but to speak
Of joy, with rapture uncontroll'd
Thy lips their coral gates unfold !
Ere yet one bright and cherub trace
Of Heaven hath parted from thy face.
O Youth ! so passing blithe and fair !
Why should not Time thy gladness spare ?

Now sixteen summers just had sped
In rapid course o'er Mary's head,—
Each gave her cheek a brighter hue,
Each to her mind some treasure new.
Her sire—what wonder?—long had eyed
His child, his idol, with the pride
Which deems its darling hath no peer
Among her sister-beauties here ;
And longs the envying world should view
Her matchless charms, and think so, too :

At length, this boastful rapture, nursed
In secret, forth to utterance burst.
'T was on that smiling April day,
He to his lady spouse did say,
“ I think, as now advances spring,
Our girl to town 't were well to bring ;
'T is time she went to court, my dear ! ”
Quick cries the lady, “ What !—this year ?
Court at sixteen ! too soon, no doubt !
All the young ladies round about—
The Greys—the Mordaunts—ne'er were seen—
Never presented till eighteen.”
“ Nay, as you will—perchance, you've reason ;
Well then, we keep at home this season.
That last election thinn'd my purse,
Which, truth to say, requires a nurse ;
Though on dear Mary's pleasure bent,
I should not count how much I spent.”

The lady hears—and from her spouse
Hides sudden fears ; she knits her brows,
And o'er her features, still most fair,
Calls up a bland persuaded air ;
“ *Réflexion faite*—you may be right,
I would not stand in Mary's light ;
And to her pleasure I my own
Would sacrifice ;—let's go to town ! ”
She utter'd not her thought of woe,—
“ How rapidly one's daughters grow ! ”

Yes, pain can seize a mother's heart,
When, ere her mellow'd charms depart,
She must, a full-blown rose, retire,
While eager crowds the bud admire ;
And while a daughter at her feet
Hath words that burn, and hearts that beat,
Must fill the chaperon's lonely seat !

Ye whom a fate like this doth scare,
Be wise, though Cupid sets the snare,
Bid the sly urchin from your door,
To come again at *twenty-four*;
Then wedded, to such follies cold,
At placid forty you'll behold,
Without an envious thought or care,
Your second-self—or one more fair;—
Hear with fond pride your daughter's name,
Look calmly on the lively game,
Nor wince, if careless tongue should say,
“Her mother, too, *she had her day*!”

Hail, Fashion! thou mysterious queen!
Whose reign omnipotent hath been:
Ay, since the times remote and dark,
When Mistress Noah left her ark!
Sovereign, whose subjects ne'er rebel,
Though of tyrannic sway they tell!
Thy sceptre, Queen, whom all adore,
Hath strange and elephantine power,—
Can rout an army with its strength,
Or raise a pin an atom's length:
The young, the noble, and the gay,
Hear thy loved voice, and straight obey.
What though the spring, with open arms,
Spreads to their gaze her wealth of charms
With primrose and with kingcup gilds
The hedge-row banks, the sunny fields,
Thou call'st—and from these scenes they part,
To mingle in thy busy mart,
And thought, and health, and pleasure drown
In the dull mazes of a town!
Then, when the dog-star rages high,
Thou bidd'st the obedient throng to fly
To coasts, where not a leaf of green
Their beauty from the blaze may screen;

Let scorch'd-up eyes and sun-brown'd faces
Declare thy might at watering-places !
Then, when rough Winter's frost and snow
His dismal coming makes them know,
And all is gloom and storm and rain,
And bowers are stripp'd, and hill and plain,
And garden path and shelter'd wood,
Are carpeted alike with mud,
Thou drivest the herd, most stern of Queens,
To the repose of country scenes :
O, prithee, for one little season,
Rule this poor weary world by reason !

At thy decree must Mary go,
The town's tumultuous joys to know.
In simple garb, the lovely maid
Is for the journey soon array'd ;
But ere she leaves that haunted ground,
With tearful gaze she looks around,
And every flower and every tree
Awakens her fond sympathy,
As, sparkling with fresh morning dew,
They seem to wave a kind adieu !
She knows not yet of courtlier joys,
No anxious thought her mind employs ;
She never dream'd of tricks or arts
Used by coquettes to win light hearts ;
The snow-white lily of the lea
Is not more free from guile than she !

The journey o'er—in Grosvenor Square
Behold arrived our timid fair,
Perplex'd and deafen'd by the din
Of crowds and carriages that spin
In dizzy whirl through every street
Where busy trade and luxury meet.

At first the strangeness and surprise
 Brings her no joy—she softly sighs,
 “O my own home! that I were there
 ’Mid its green fields and purer air!”

Short time hath she to muse and dream
 Of grove-crown’d hill, and placid stream,
 For Mary is a child no more,
 And a gay host assails her door
 With smiles, and becks, and modish airs,
Marchandes de modes—and *couturières*.
 At first she shrinks back half-ashamed,
 As loud their splendid wares are named.
 One tells how rulers of the *monde*
 Wear just such satin, just such blonde;
 Another, as a peacock vain,
 Spreads out a *corsage* and a train:
 “*Pour une miladi, aussi belle,*
Ça irait vraiment à merveille.”
 A third brings wreaths so fair to see,
 The King of Judah’s (1) cunning bee
 From flower to flower had boldly flown,
 And deem’d them surely nature’s own.
 All praised her *tournure*, and her grace,
 Till modest blushes dyed her face;
 Then each, demanding “*pardon*,” thought
 “That if *sa seigneurie* had bought
 A few more *nouveautés* ’t were wise,
 Ere they were shown to other eyes—
 As now *les grandes dames* wish’d to buy
 More than their *artistes* could supply;

(1) It is a Rabbinical tradition, that one of the questions which the Queen of Sheba submitted for consideration to Solomon the Wise took the form of a couple of wreaths—the one of natural, the other of artificial, flowers. The monarch, unable to decide between nature and art, called in the aid of a swarm of bees, which, by settling upon the genuine wreath, saved the King of Judah’s reputation for wisdom.

For then, just then,—'t was sad, but true—
Even if they wrought the whole night through,
Full many a lady needs must wait
Who 'd order'd robes for the next fête."
The prologues done—the father sighs,
As all those glittering gauds he eyes;
And, while his spouse makes haste to tell
Their cheapness is a miracle,
He thinks of his estates at nurse,
And in his pocket grasps his purse.

And now to Mary's wondering eyes,
Behold the magic curtain rise;
O day of joy, and agitation,
Comes on her courtly presentation!
Gems deck her brow, and waving plumes,
Her train came forth from Genoa's looms,
And rich transparent folds of lace
Fall from her head with airy grace;
To Nature, Art has lent its aid,
And proud she looks, though half afraid.
No longer now the sportive child,
With buoyant step, and spirits wild,
Who chased the winged flowers of air,
Or wander'd through her bright parterre;
School'd to a stately dignity
She moves, while crowds press on to see
A form from Beauty's finest mould,
Which all of purple, and of gold,
Of nodding plume, and diamond bright,
Are but too poor to deck aright!
They little dream who see her glide
On her new path with mien of pride,
How in her secret throbbing breast,
A trembling timid heart doth rest!

Her mother leads her through the throng,
Who whisper as she moves along,

Some, with a haggard envious air,
Whose ancient faces round her stare,
“Wonder the men so weak can be,
So undiscerning, as to see
One single charm or winning grace
In such a blushing baby face.”
In vain they cavil—gallants gay
From older beauties shrink away;
Eye the fair girl with flattering gaze,
And whisper, to be heard, her praise;
Their words, “How charming!” meet her ear,
A spell to dissipate her fear.
More calm, she nears the throne at last—
A step—the dreaded ordeal’s past!

She bends before our gentle Queen,
The youngest, fairest, ever seen,
The rose of England’s rich parterre
(Where every flower is passing fair);
All youth, all hope, all loveliness,
Whom millions only name to bless.
How dazzling is that open brow!
Not e’en the diadem, whose glow
Encircles it with lustre bright,
Casts into shade its gentle light;
So dignified, so lofty, mild,
There meet the angel, woman, child.
O! who could gaze upon thy face,
Young scion of a royal race,
Without that warm and earnest feeling
To hand, and heart, and word, appealing,
Which stirr’d so well in days gone by
Old England’s glorious chivalry,
And now surrounds thy stately throne
With millions proud thy sway to own,
Ready the wide world to defy,
And quick to arm—and blest to die,

Ere from thy royal coronal
Its smallest gem shall fade or fall !
Thy gracious glance with gentle spell
Can many a fluttering tremor quell,
As our young timid maid can tell ;
Who never even in dreams hath been
In such a bright and gorgeous scene.
Before her, sparkling in the light,
Dance waving plumes, flash diamonds bright ;
A thousand trains come sweeping by,
A thousand beauties meet her eye :
But o'er them all, like star serene,
She sees her lovely gentle Queen !

And now,—the presentation o'er,
Which opens fashion's fairy door—
A thousand perfumed billets come
Scrawl'd with these peaceful words, "At Home !"
She, in her young simplicity,
Admires the domesticity
Of those whom opera, dinner, rout,
Tempt to the sparkling world without !
But soon (the enigma's point to reach)
A few entrancing midnights teach
By nodding plumes, and whirling feet,
And wheels that thunder down the street,
And glittering lamps and music loud,
"At home," in London means "a crowd !"

No longer deck'd in waving plumes,
Mary a simpler dress assumes,—
A robe that well her form displays,
And many a silken ringlet strays
Round pearly brow, and cheek that glows
With Youth and Health's most brilliant rose,
At her first ball—where smile and stare
Our heroine's rising power declare—

Her mother proud, with practised eye,
Dissects the crowds that hover nigh ;
No younger brother dare draw near,
To whisper in her treasure's ear.
Ah ! in the world where hearts are stakes,
Too oft the blessing Esau takes !

Now, shall we gently cast aside
The veil that Mary's heart doth hide ?
And whisper to all friendly ears,
That child-like as the maid appears,—
There is one youth, whose glance hath met
Her own, she longs to know, and yet,
For worlds she could not ask his name ;
The thought's enough to tint with shame
Her fair young cheek—though, truth to own,
The maiden now hath curious grown,
For those deep lustrous eyes have cast
Spells o'er her thoughts to hold them fast ;
She look'd but once, and half was won—
She look'd again, her heart was gone !

O Love ! that find'st thy path through eyes,
Reveal'd by glances and soft sighs,
The harbingers of hopes and fears,
And rosy blushes, smiles, and tears,—
Why, wily archer, try thine art
On such a young unguarded heart ?
Why, ere yet childhood's dreams have flown,
Ere life its fairest views hath shown,
Chase halcyon Peace from that sweet nest
She builds in such a gentle breast ?
The experienced mother marks the gaze
With which the youth her child surveys,—
The blush that dyes her modest cheek,—
And though 't is best no word to speak,
Swift through her heart a hope *will* glance,
That he will with her Mary dance :

For well she knows, by form and air,
He ranks among the noblest there.
Is it all vainly she aspires ?
For lo ! the admired one swift retires :—
He's gone—there seems a cloud to creep
O'er Mary's bosom still and deep—
He's gone—but, no—he's here again,
Leading the Duchess Deloraine.
With outstretch'd hand and smiling face
Thus speaks at once her sapient Grace:—

“ Dear Lady Percy, how d'ye do ?
I thought it could be only you
My son described—let me present
Lord Deloraine ; indeed I meant
To seek you—this is Lady Mary,
Whom I remember, like a fairy,
When tripping lightly round your room,
Her lip all smiles, her cheek all bloom.
I should have known her by her brow
And chin. Dear Girl, will you allow
Me to present Lord Deloraine ?
You'll make his mother very vain
If you to him your smiles extend,
And to her also as the friend
Of Lady Percy. How's your Lord ?
Your daughter's charming, on my word !
While you—I vow I heard Lord Lyster
Say you look'd like her elder sister.
My son has just come from the East,
But has not suffer'd in the least,
Though hundreds are in Smyrna dead,
None saved, except the wise, who fled
That dreadful plague !—It never ends,
It kill'd a dozen of his friends—
But Heaven be thank'd—once more at home,
I trust he ne'er again will roam.

Well, Lady Mary's quite a Belle,
And dress'd, I must say, *à merveille*—
Any attachment, *entre nous*?
Too young?—ha! ha! that's so like you!
Au revoir, chère amie! adieu!"

While thus his mother's nimble tongue
Talk'd on—the son enchanted hung
On every smile, and winning grace,
That play'd o'er Mary's lovely face;
The while she listen'd as he told
Of many a storied land of old—
Few words were said, ere youth and maid
A kindly feeling did pervade:
Did ever traveller talk so sprightly?
Smiled ever beauty's eyes so brightly
The mother, with abundant tact,
The chaperon's part did well enact,
No over-mark'd desire to please,
No feign'd reserve—she talk'd at ease
Of climes, and courts, where he had been,
With wit and taste, which made it seem
That study and reflection taught her:
This gives bright promise for her daughter;
So deems the youth, whom half-past five
Sees homeward from that revel drive.

We tell not Mary's dreams that night,
Or how next morning with delight
She thought, past doubt, that they should meet,
Or in the park or in the street,
Then gently sigh'd while counting o'er
The hours which must elapse before.
At length—at length the clock strikes five,
And Mary's summon'd for a drive.
She throws by a half-finish'd sonnet,
And blushes as she ties her bonnet,

Then smiles as in the glass she sees
A face that every eye must please ;
Each Beau she passes in the street
Causes her timid heart to beat ;
Afar—she thinks it Deloraine,
But near—O hope ! why art thou vain ?
He comes not—an incipient pout
Longs to enwreath her lips about ;
But her sweet nature conquers spleen,
And home return'd, there 's something seen,
On which her smiles uncheck'd may fall :
His card—she finds it in the hall !

Now at her mirror stands our Mary,
Like Cinderella dress'd by fairy :
A robe, than gossamer more light,
And whiter e'en than snow is white,
She wears ; and with a bright wreath dresses
The rich net of her glossy tresses.
Ah ! who that saw her thus array'd
Did e'er behold a fairer maid !
While crowded carriages encumber
The streets, she wonders at the number ;
So patient waiting in the square,
Ere they arrive the ball to share,
When but one Deloraine *can* be there !

Now strains of music float around,
Mingling with many a harsher sound
Of crushing panels, curses, cries,
As coachman, meeting coachman, tries
To win the portal, whence a blaze
Of light streams, brilliant as the rays
Of noonday-sun ; while passers by
Pause, and move on with envious sigh.

At length released, and in the hall,
Their names the liveried Stentors call :

Unshawl'd, uncloak'd, they slow ascend,
'Midst flowers that thousand odours blend ;
And once again a fairy scene
Holds her, in beauty's right, its Queen !
They reach at last the bright saloon,
One with a beating heart—how soon
To beat more wildly :—yes ! 't is he
Who nought but Mary seems to see.
In her mild eyes one care will dwell—
She hath not greeted him too well ?
He bolder, blessing friendly chance,
Must claim her for the coming dance ;
While some with jealous envy vex'd,
Sneer as they pass, and ask, " What next ? "

O ! who that view'd so bright a scene
Could guess that sorrow here had been ;
That any through the dance who glide,
In splendour deck'd, elate with pride,
Had seen hopes changed for gloomy fears,
Had known the sad relief of tears—
As bending o'er the cherish'd dead
They deem'd that joy for aye had fled ;
While now, forgetful, at the call
Of mirth, they fill her echoing hall ?
Yet, in these proud and gilded rooms,
Where music, blent with rich perfumes
From fair exotic garlands wreathed,
Upon the entranced sense hath breathed ;
Where mirrors loveliest shapes display,
As through the mazy dance they stray ;
E'en here cold Death has held his state—
Here drooping mourners wept the fate
Of some, whom not e'en Love could save
From the stern beckoner to the grave ;
Here, where the flowery trophies rise,
Came breaking hearts, and streaming eyes ;

Here, where the airiest feet resound,
A sable pall hath swept the ground;
Down yonder staircase broad and deep,
A funeral train was seen to sweep:
O! strange, how revelry and death—
The smile above, the worm beneath,—
Divide this earth, till scarce we know
Which is the master, Mirth or Woe.
O! where's the dwelling, rich and vast,
Wherein no scenes like these have pass'd;
Where yet no tear was ever shed—
Came in no fear—went out no dead?
A few bright days—a few brief years,
And each house is baptised in tears;
A few sad hours of sorrow o'er,
And Folly shakes her bells once more!

Now skill'd in every art to please,
Deloraine his partner set at ease;
He talk'd of scenery and flowers,
And books that bring us pleasant hours,
Till by his converse, wise and mild,
Was won the dear confiding child.
But deem not her simplicity
Had aught of crude rusticity,
For dignity and native sense
Were mingled with her innocence:
And soon his mind, with projects rife,
Of his young partner makes a wife;
So young, so artless, and so fair,
Bless'd by his stars, he'll win and wear;
And she but who can paint that heart
Where vanity had ne'er a part;
Where ne'er malicious thought had birth,—
A shrine that makes a heaven of earth?
He to her mother leads the fair,
Then hovers anxious near her chair,

Marking with new-born jealousy
A herd of beaux, who flock to see
One of whose beauty tongues are loud ;
While she, unconscious why the crowd
Press round, beholds but Deloraine,
And hopes that near her he 'll remain.
Some twenty youths, with bows, demand
To be presented—ask her hand
For coming dances ;—ask in vain—
She dances not the night again.
Her mother's tactics only grant
One partner to the *débutante* ;
She fears fatigue—she talks of heat,
So Mary gladly keeps her seat.
Again Lord Deloraine draws nigh,
With softest words and earnest eye,
Her cheek with brightest roses blooms
Her eye a sparkling light illumines,
As he ('t is music's sweetest strain !)
Murmurs the words—" We meet again !"
Ne'er had he paid to any other
Such court as to our Mary's mother ;
By flatteries, which adroitly hit,
He makes her feel herself a wit,
And all the sprightly words she measures
Thankful receives as precious treasures :
Some spell—he asks not how or why—
Opens new vistas to his eye ;
For when mamma, with wisdom trite,
Says " Girls should not sit up all night,"
And firmly will demand her carriage,
The word recalls another " marriage !"
Marriage !—to him ! few weeks had sped
Since he had vow'd he'd never wed
Until that age when, *blasé*, cool,
A man's too old to play the fool !—

O strong, strong man! one glance at Mary
Had made his life's whole purpose vary!

What were the dreams, that sweet spring night,
That floated o'er her slumbers light?
So pure, so blithe, so blest were they,
That Sleep had brighter hours than Day.
Again within that festive scene,
Where erst with Deloraine she had been,
She stoop'd to hear his whisper'd praise,
She shrunk back from his glowing gaze,
Like touch of an enchanter's wand
She felt the farewell of his hand;
And yet how timidly 't was taken—
He *touch'd*, where common friend had *shaken*!
And then a sudden change comes o'er
Her dream—the maiden roves once more
With him amid the favourite shade
Of well-known grove and woodland glade,
Shows him the flowers she loved to rear,
Which he, by praising, makes more dear;
Points out each cherish'd haunt—the view
Of limpid stream and mountain blue;
And feels, the while he fondly speaks,
Her native breezes fan her cheeks.
They plan—they talk of future schemes,
And now to kiss her hand he seems—
She wakens . . . 'T was the dream of dreams!

Of all our *fêtes*, the wise ones say,
There's nothing like a *déjeûner*,
In gardens rife with vernal bloom,
That to the air exhales perfume;
Where down through many a rich *bosquet*
Blithe Music's voice is heard to stray,
And women with the bright flowers vie
Which shall the most enchant the eye.

The same soft tints of lily, rose,
Do many a cheek and leaf disclose,
And both so radiant in their bloom ;
Alike their beauty and their doom,
For the fair pride of home and lea
Soon fades and dies—ah ! wo is me !
That flowers must droop and fair cheeks wither,
When Death and Winter cry “ Come hither ! ”
Why should not Beauty wear more slowly ?—
A truce to thoughts so melancholy.

A *déjeuner*’s a charming thing
In summer, for though poets sing
Of thy enchantments, vernal Spring,
Alas ! we of them little know,
Save what Arcadian writers show.
They never told of north-east winds—
Whirling the dust until it blinds ;
Of a bright sun, whose beams can freeze ;
Of airs, whose keenness makes us sneeze ;
Of dews vouchsafed in storms of rain,
Until we want the Ark again ;
Of agues, fevers, and sore throats ;
Of fur-lined mantles and great-coats ;
Yet thus—thy old enchantments undone—
O Spring ! thou meet’st mankind in London !
Yet, strange to tell, though year by year
The same chill spectre doth appear,
Instead of that young nymph, who still is
By rhymesters crown’d with daffodillies,
Whom we remember from our cradles,
Described in every poet’s fables—
How wild their words—how warm their praise—
And ours what folly still to raise
Our expectations towards that Spring,
Which not even May itself doth bring.

Peace, saucy minstrel!—nor forget
How Summer sometimes pays the debt
With days, like angel-visits seen,
Most bright—but “few and far between.”
And sure it is, such visits rare
Make us esteem them doubly fair,
And Nature’s brightest to their eyes
Who see her, sun-lit, with surprise.
’Tis pleasant, through umbrageous trees,
To watch the groups with careless ease,
That far and near, and fair and free,
Wind like the nymphs of Arcady;
White flowing robes become them well,
And each at distance seems a belle,
And tripping from some green retreat
Of cluster’d leaves and garlands sweet,
Is credited with fairy feet:
And the unusual exercise
Tints up the cheeks and lights the eyes.
What wonder, then, that lover’s tale
Makes eloquent each bower and dale?
That flattery’s soft and silver tongue
Then smoothest speaks from old and young—
And all are bent on charming hours,
’Mid such a paradise of flowers?

As Mary, at her mother’s side,
Walk’d gracefully, her suitors vied
Which could extol her charms the most,
Or of her slight acquaintance boast;
Nay, some, to whom she scarce had bow’d,
Of her sweet temper spoke aloud,
And charming sayings had to tell
Of her they call’d *their* favourite belle.
Her mother was, the men all said,
A damask rose of royal red;

And Mary was the bud half-blown,
That each one wish'd to call his own,
And wear on his vain-glorious breast,
To raise the envy of the rest.

She heard not words that quick flew by,
The ready compliment—the sigh—
Nor saw grave men, at Love who joke,
Now prone to kneel before she spoke—
Her heart, her eye, her ear were gone,
She had but words, but thoughts, for one.
At length, at distance in the crowd,
Deloraine she saw, and said aloud,
“'T is he!” “Pray who?” with placid tone,
Her mother asks—a blush hath flown
To her clear cheek—she feels it burn,
And redder roses mount in turn.
But ere she could an answer frame,
A troop of ladies round her came;
She stops—there hangs on Deloraine's arm
A graceful form; how many a charm
Bewitching doth that maid array,
And points the pang that will have way,
As forced, alas! to pause and see,
Her heart grew sick—she wish'd to be
Apart from all that brilliant throng,
Apart from smile, and jest, and song:
The *fête* so late all mirth and light,
Hath lost its gladness to her sight;
The women teaze, the men annoy,
The giddy crowd can yield no joy;
A tear (that would despite her rise)
Sought to escape from her bright eyes,
As past she saw Lord Deloraine glide,
With that fair lady at his side.

O Jealousy! thy serpent fang
Strikes through the heart its keenest pang;

Thou changest Summer's sunny air
To Winter's hue of dull despair ;
The young rose with its radiant bloom,
For the wan flower that decks the tomb ;
And with thy cold insidious art,
Bidd'st Hope from warmest breast depart.
How mused our maid on every charm
Of her who hung on Deloraine's arm ;
One minute's length had been that gaze,
But, oh ! so fraught with wild amaze,
A long life it had seem'd to be
To her excited phantasy.
With care she scarcely knew to hide,
That beauty how she magnified,
Which every eye that both had known
Must find inferior to her own !
That smile, how brightly did it shine.
“ Ah ! ” Mary thought, “ what chance had mine ? ”
Yet had some fairy made her pass
That woman's shrine—a looking-glass,
Even she, all jealous, must have seen
Which was of Beauty's empire queen :
But on she wander'd, mute and slow —
How tedious seem'd the revel now !
The smiling dandies how she hated ;
The tiresome chaperons how they prated !
“ Would it were done ! ” she sighs once more,
“ Was ever fête so dull before ? ”

An hour—a long, long hour—has flown ;
A year she thought had fleeter gone ;
When as her eyes, that wander wide,
From the green alley turn aside,
Lo ! from the lawn Lord Deloraine,
With that fair lady, comes again ;
Some one he seems in haste to seek,
And blushes rise to Mary's cheek,

Their glances meet—ah ! vain to hide
Her gentle joy, as at her side,
Eager he takes his wonted place,
With rapture beaming in his face ;
Tells her how vainly, and how long,
He sought her 'mid the motley throng ;
Some witchcraft (what, she knows not well)
Hath o'er the revel cast a spell ;
She guesses not what magic wand
Restores her back to fairy land,
And for those thoughts of saddening strain,
Gives back her young bright hopes again.
That dreaded rival, it appears,
Had Mary's mother known for years ;
The two, enchanted at the meeting,
Exchange at once the kindest greeting :
“ So glad !—a sweet surprise ! my dear,
(Lord Deloraine's cousin) Lady Vere !”

Together now through shady walk
And rich parterre they stroll and talk ;
Mary hath but one grief, alas !
That hours will now like moments pass.
'Tis true, no words of love were spoken,
But glance and smile, by many a token,
Told that the link, which but death parts,
Was flung around a pair of hearts :
In truth, 't was passing fair to see
Mary, with sweet simplicity,
Droop her long lashes 'neath his gaze,
That look'd his worship and her praise,
The while she thought that praise was sweet
As childhood's music, when we meet
Its echoes in a stranger land,
And wrapt in pensive reverie stand,
Dwelling on happy days gone by,
Until a tear-drop dew the eye ;

And well we love that sadness brief,
The softness—not the sting of grief,
E'en while we sighing ask again
To hear that loved and ancient strain.

But Beauty (so a bard of ours
Declares), alas ! can't live on flowers ;
And honey'd words, however dear,
And charming to the thirsty ear,
Too fine are, too ambrosial quite,
To satisfy the appetite.

And hence our senses to content,
Luxurious *déjeûners* were meant ;
A rich repast,—O call not food
The choice inventions of a Ude !
Now even lovers rush to eat,
And happy they who find a seat—
So thickly streams the crowd aside,
To taste the good the gods provide !

'Tis strange, that when the eye reposes
On summer skies and beds of roses,
And fountains, with their spray showers glancing,
And green leaves in the south wind dancing,
That tyrant hunger, grossest sense !
Will not a few short hours dispense
His *congé* to poor earthly sinners,
But sets them craving for their dinners ;
'Tis strange that all, howe'er refined,
Of lofty thought, poetic mind,
Nor leaves nor roses will espy,
If but a tempting *pâté's* by ;
Transparent fountains flow in vain,
If froth for them the brisk champagne,
As chuckling, while they pile a plate,
They cry, " I love a rural *fête* !"
'Tis strange—explain it, learned sages,
That chaperons all, whate'er their ages,

Whether Dame Fortune smiles or spites,
Rejoice in boundless appetites ;
And some I've seen such homage do
To fish, flesh, fowl, and pastry too,
Fearless of ache or indigestion,
Having profoundly solved the question,
How many different foods with zest
A Christian stomach can digest ;
That hecatombs must offer up
The amazed Amphitryons where they sup.
Maidens, *au contraire*, little eat ;
How should they, when, from neighbouring seat,
A lover, with devouring eyes,
Each tempting morsel jealous spies ?
Ye charmers, who would lovers gain,
To hover round, a sighing train !
From all but sparrow-meals refrain.
Men bear a small plump hand to see
A golden fork wield gracefully,
Not guided by a heart intent,
Like nun's, half starved with keeping Lent,
But in a light capricious way,
As less in hunger than in play.
Would you enchain the creatures fast,
Choose delicately for repast
Of whitest chicken, one small slice—
Some orange jelly, cool as ice—
Three cherries, and an almond cake—
And water tinged with wine;—they'll make
A charm not Samson's self could break.
But should your suitors chance to spy
The open mouth, the hungry eye,
You'll look around,—and where are they ?
Scared—gone—and sure, past doubt, to say,
“Nay, saw you that?—no joke, indeed !
I hate to see a woman feed !”

And now, 't is dark and balmy night;
Ten thousand lamps hang forth their light
From high verandahs, arches, bowers,
Festoon'd with pendant wreaths of flowers.
And glorious shines the summer green
Of tree and shrub by that light seen;
And delicate the rainbow dyes
Of every flower that odour sighs;
And spirit-like the white-robed maids,
That loiter 'mid the garden shades:
There's not a rhymester there that night,
But calls the scene Elysian quite,
And waxing sentimental on it,
Thinks of Boccaccio and a sonnet;
Or some bright isle of genii sprites
We read of in the "Arabian Nights;"
Or some bright banquet which Watteau,
With courtier pencil, loved to show;
Or, if excursive grow his fancies,
He conjures up those old romances,
Where sorceress, for her favourite's bliss,
Would raise, by spells, a scene like this,
Which chaster knight could, with one prayer
And holy sign, disperse in air;
Music from dusky ambush stole,
To witch with melody the soul,
As wandering minstrels sung soft lays,
Such as Moore writes and Thalberg plays;
And, oh! the voice hath wondrous power
To melt, to move, at such an hour.
As Mary walk'd with Deloraine,
They paused, arrested by a strain,
The notes were rich, and low, and sweet,
Voice of a mind—nor all unmeet
The words, of Love in ambuscade,
Which Deloraine's secret thoughts betray'd.

“ O ! fair, surpassing fair, thou art,
Unconscious all—the Graces’ boast;
What wonder myriads seek thy heart?
But, Lady, I adore thee most !

“ When others on thy beauty dwell,
Hang on thy words, explore thine eyes,
O, never earthly bard could tell
What thoughts within my bosom rise.

“ Let speechless love in sighs reveal
That passion which the bolder vow ;
And let one thought of pity steal
For him who never felt till now.

“ Tell her, ye stars ! thou winged air,
Breathe to her, Flora’s painted host,
That I am true as she is fair—
Though all *must* love, I love her most !”

The strain is o’er—ere Deloraine speaks,
Bright blushes mount to Mary’s cheeks,
For well she guesses, by his sigh,
He would the minstrel’s lay apply ;
And, aided by another’s art,
Reveal the secret of his heart.
But Modesty, her guardian, throws
Its ægis round her—grave she grows,
As quick her head is turn’d aside,
Her cheek’s deep rosy blush to hide.
Still look’d he earnest—still he sought
In her mild eyes to read her thought,
If her heart’s inmost folds among
There lurk’d kind answer to that song.
And still she fear’d to meet his eye,
Lest her confusion he should spy ;
For yet, though soften’d, charm’d, and moved,
She only *hopes* she is beloved !

And, self-accusing, thinks it wrong
To give such meaning to a song :
Thus, he all fear, and she all shame,
He breathes no word to tell his flame.
At length her mother she descried,
Then flew, half flutter'd, to her side !
For Cræsus' wealth he should not know
The fancies which disturb'd her so,
While all the firmer chain'd was he,
By her young timid modesty.
O Modesty ! which angels yield
To helpless woman for a shield,
What diamond from Golconda's mine
Adorns her brow like blush of thine ?
Worthless the form, and coarse the face
(However fair) thou dost not grace ;
The sweetest voice is like a lute
Strung with harsh chords, when thou art mute ;
The heart, a stain'd and ruin'd shrine,
Thou dost not enter to refine ;
The eye but shoots a meteor gleam
Noxious and keen without thy beam.
How vainly beauty, lacking thee,
Would chain men's love—sweet Modesty !
Cestus that Venus surely wore,
To wile a world in days of yore,
The charm that she to Juno lent,
When that bold dark-eyed queen was bent
To win the recreant from her love,
The haughty and inconstant Jove.
Bright spirit ! thou in Mary's eye
Smilest when she bids Deloraine good-by !
And fairy follower—at her call,
Attend'st her from that festival !
Mary's at home—and pondering o'er
Each word of *his*, as ne'er before

She dwelt on them. His looks of love,
Even now recall'd, have power to move;
Of his sweet voice, each cherish'd tone
Fond Memory has made its own,
So dear and so familiar grown.
Some little thought of earthly cares
Are mingled with her fervent prayers,
Hopes that they soon again shall meet,
Before she yields to slumber sweet
As falls on infant's brow, ere guile
Hath chased its Heaven-remembering smile!
Then white-robed innocence doth bend,
And o'er her couch its wings extend.
Visions of love and happiness,
Soothing and calm, her pillow bless;
Nor purer dreams the blessed know,
Released from earth and all its wo.

It is a lovely sight to see
A maiden in the privacy
Of her own chamber—where the day
In gentle studies glides away:
Her spirit breathes through all things round—
The dainty volumes that abound;
The silken broidery in its frame,
That might e'en Flora's labour shame;
The easel, where no critic's eye
A meretricious taste could spy;
The harp, on which she loves to play,
Singing the while some sweet old lay;
Here gay and placid speed the hours,
Among her music, books, and flowers—
No thought of care or anger rude,
No breath of evil dare intrude,
No babbler, fraught with idle speech,
This maiden solitude can reach:

Save her fond Sire's, no footstep male
Has e'er presumed to cross its pale.
Here he brings gifts of gem and flower,
And Indian birds to deck her bower ;
And, dearer gifts ! her mother oft
With looks of love, and accents soft,
Steals in to bless her duteous child,
And leave behind her counsels mild ;
There 's not a book that here may lie,
Unseen by that unsleeping eye,
Which knows how subtly books might lure
That maiden, still so angel-pure.
Here, where a crucifix you 'd see,
Did Southern maiden bend the knee,
The " Book of Life " is laid, and read—
I know it by the page outspread ;
Approach'd with love and reverent awe,
Our maiden from its page will draw
Those hopes that light declining years,
Those promises that dry our tears !
The very air that lingers round
This sanctuary is sweet—no sound,
Except of music rich and low,
Or gentle voices, doth it know :
Listen ! her hand is on the strings,
And, artless, to herself she sings.

SONG.

Oh ! never doubt I love thee !
When every sigh of thine
Awakens Echo's music
Within this heart of mine !

Oh ! never doubt I love thee !
Thy smile, oh ! oft it gleams,
Like fabled lamps of fairies,
To cheer my midnight dreams !

Oh ! never doubt I love thee !
 As few have loved before ;
 There 's nought can change my worship
 Till life itself be o'er !

The song is o'er—why doth she seem
 Abstracted—lost in pleasant dream ?
 Her harp is left—she turns aside,
 And now her taper fingers guide
 The pencil.—No, 't is all in vain !
 What art could picture Deloraine ?
 A step is heard—with glowing cheeks
 She hides the sketch—and vainly seeks
 To sing as blithely as before,
 While her good mother 's at the door.

O Love ! thou subtle dexterous cheat,
 To *such* a mind to prompt deceit !
 Thy wily lessons to impart
 To one, till now, who knew not art ;—
 To teach our Mary's heart to glow
 With secret thoughts, she dare not show
 To her, who erst each feeling shared,
 As if its utmost cells were bared !
 Ah ! why thus rend the tender bond
 'Twixt duteous child and mother fond ?
 'T is strange thy sudden work to see,
 Begun—complete :—*Telle est la vie !*

Among the beaux who flutter'd round
 The gentle Mary, some were found
 Of that unworthy class, too common,
 Who speak despitefully of woman,
 And who, with empty purse and head,
 For fortune only, woo, and wed ;
 With mind as vacant as the heart,
 Willing with liberty to part,

If in exchange they but obtain
The gold to forge dull Hymen's chain :
“For gold,” they swear—(how dainty slip
The oaths from each moustachio'd lip !)
“With welcome weight can never gall,
Nor its bright charms (like Beauty's) pall !”

Among these gems Lord Squander shone,
A flashy—but not precious stone,
His health, his wealth, his feelings gone :
Misguided youth !—a prey to ills
Which spring from long-neglected bills ;
Heir of an old estate, 't was true—
Now doubly mortgaged to the Jew—
Compell'd the evils to endure
Which only can an heiress cure—
“It must be so !” he sighs ; “and 'gad !
'T will make some pretty person glad”—
For ruin tries in vain to shake
The self-assurance of a rake.

O Vanity ! 't is passing strange,
That thou, content with little change,
The weakest heads wilt always rule,
Nor from thy empire spare one fool !
Our bold Adonis, passing well
Could every widow's jointure tell,—
Knew, certain as by rule of three,
What every spinster's wealth must be.
One month, when hard press'd—what a pity !
He turn'd his thoughts to the vile city ;
But flattering Fate, with kindly rigour,
Denied him the appointed figure—
A bless'd release ! indeed, 't were shame
To wed a miss with vulgar name ;
Whate'er her gold, if name she lacks,
A dweller of St. Mary Axe !

Oh, dreadful!—"No it ne'er could be ;
Old family and wealth for me !
A lovely girl—good manners, too."
So once again he did review
The season's list—and Mary saw,
A prize he straight would seek to draw.
He dream'd not she could e'er withstand
His thousand merits ; well he scann'd
Her thousand acres—the rent-roll
Of her papa quite charm'd his soul :
'T was very monstrous that her sire
Of life at fifty would not tire ;
Pity, for reasons sound and weighty,
They could not push him on to eighty !
But still—though not a first-rate catch—
The match would be a decent match,
And just his worn-out fortune patch.
So, fill'd with his sublime intent,
To see and conquer forth he went !

Kind were the Fates ; it oft befell
Lord Squander met our youthful Belle,
And often to her side he drew,
And tender adoration threw
Into his eyes—that she might guess
The love it bored him to confess.
She heeded not those loving eyes,
Nor once remark'd his frequent sighs ;
Or if she thought of him again,
'T was but to vote him stupid, vain !
A month went by—no progress made !
And duns most clamorous to be paid !
Urged by his pressing want of cash,
Our Celadon became more rash,
And to explain his purpose better,
Bestirr'd himself, and wrote a letter,

A letter such as, well I ween,
Few ladies' eyes have ever seen,
Self-flatteries laid on so thick ;
But then the patient was so sick
With debt—and with his love intense
Was mingled such a confidence ;
Something like this the letter said,
“ You, lovely maid, I mean to wed—
You 're far too charming, all agree,
To mate with any one save me.
To spare your blushes, I would rather
Arrange the needful with your father :
This done—though half the world may wonder,
I 'll prove myself your faithful Squander !”
Signed—sealed—the letter was despatched :
The writer yawn'd, “ At last I 'm matched !”

No fears had he—in half an hour
His homage enter'd Mary's bower,
A place unmeet for words of folly ;
They found her thoughtful—melancholy.
'T was yet unopen'd—and a hue
Of crimson to her soft cheek flew,
By love's own instinct half-deceived,
She paused, she trembled, and believed
The thing she hoped—she broke the seal,
Sure that the letter must reveal
Lord Deloraine's love, which though full well
She knew, she long'd to have him tell.
But angry as Idalia's Queen,
If, bent on journey, she had seen
Her doves towards haunts forbidden wander,
When she beheld the name of Squander,
She stood one instant lost in rage,
Then cast away the audacious page ;
She scarcely could the insult bear,
That such a brainless fop should dare

Address her thus—then once again
Thought wistfully of Deloraine.

Struggling with shame she scarce could smother,
She gave the letter to her mother ;

The Lady Percy spared her ire :

“ What ! that known *roué*?—*He* aspire
To win my child, whom best of men
Might scarce deserve? Be quick ! a pen !
I ’ll write a proper answer now !”

And, ere the flush pass’d from her brow,
A proud rejection sent to Squander
Set that brave youth agape with wonder ;
And, while he gapes, the ghosts of bets,
Dishonour’d bills, rapacious debts,
In a long line before him come,
That stretches out “ till crack of doom.”

“ Well, there ’s no choice ! and I must pity
Some golden Venus of the City !”

Were I a gossip, I could tell
Of other suitors to our Belle ;
One, Sir George Vapid, hearing praised
Her wondrous beauty—half amazed
Out of his slumbers—felt the praise,
Somewhat like love, a *penchant* raise ;
Not in his heart, but in his brain,
For he was heartless, cold, and vain,
And ne’er till doomsday had desired
To win a beauty few admired.
Had Hebe’s self come down to snare
The experienced youth of proud May Fair,
He’d but have own’d *her* goddess when
A goddess own’d her other men.

And thus it is—the word to admire
Through Fashion’s circle runs like fire ;
Nine out of ten, my Muse believes,
Thus pin their taste on others’ sleeves !

And so, with no more sapient reason,
He sought the Beauty of the Season.

Needs it to tell how soon his wooing,
Like my Lord Squander's, went to ruin?
The self-same pen—as proud, as rapid—
His answer gave to Sir George Vapid.
Great was his wonder; his dejection
Gave birth for once to cool reflection.

“There's some one else, I clearly see,
Will carry off this prodigy—
I should have liked the gem to wear,
And make my friends at Crockford's stare!”
Hail, Envy! thou their choicest bliss
Givest, by rebound, to fools like this!

Now change the scene for one more gay!
At least, so lords and ladies say;
The maiden's chamber fades in air,
And with its sparkle and its glare,
And music's ever-witching spell,
The Opera woos our youthful Belle.
For many a wise and cogent reason,
The Lady Percy had each season
An opera-box; yet, though no prude,
Suspicious doubt would now intrude,
Whether 't was right her virgin treasure
Should share that fascinating pleasure?
She scarcely knows what she intends,
And hints her scruples to her friends;
But all, inured to play and *ballet*,
With many a pleasantry did rally
The fears which in the mother woke.
“How very odd!—'t was quite a joke!
Why, all young ladies, when presented,
That harmless paradise frequented.
What is it you can see alarming?
Not the Cachouca?—that's so charming!”

“ My daughters, though they sometimes flush,”
Quoth one high dame, “ did never blush—
Not even in their earliest teens :
I’ve got a box beneath the Queen’s.”
Such sapient rhetoric laugh’d down all
The reasons *Madame Mère* could call
For or against ; and, thus persuaded,
Mary, she said, should do as they did—
The glories of the Opera see,
And learn to speak with ecstasy,
As Grisi, like a summer bird,
Pour’d forth the tones, while none who heard
Had pity wherewithal to note
How much the syren strain’d her throat.

The night is come—and now to eyes
Behold the scarlet curtain rise,
Which never novel’s page had read,
But history, voyages instead,
With lives of great and virtuous men,
Such as a Plutarch loved to pen ;
For poetry the maid had pleaded,
And but enjoy’d it—wisely weeded ;
Little she dream’d, how much less knew,
What things Italian playwrights do !
Judge then—to make her entrance easy,
The piece was “ Norma,” play’d by Grisi !
A priestess breaking vestal vows,
A mother twice—not once a spouse ;
All frenetic with jealous rage,
Which nought but vengeance can assuage,
Grasping a keen and murderous dagger,
To yon low couch behold her stagger,
Where sleep her babes ;—but love prevails—
The mother stays—the murderess fails !
When this dark picture Mary saw,
She trembled—scarcely dared to draw

Her breath—the while Bellini stole
With magic witchery through her soul,
And tears relieved her ; then there came
O'er her young brow the blush of shame.
Around she timid glanced her eye,
But none look'd shock'd and none look'd shy ;
Faces as youthful as her own
Were placid all—nor there were shown
The feelings waken'd in *her* breast,
By Norma's love and shame confess'd !
The curtain falls—the horror's o'er,
And Mary calmer breathes once more !

Brisk music gayer scenes announces,
And in a half-dress'd *danseuse* bounces,
With arms that wreath and eyes that swim,
And drapery that scarce shades each limb,
And lip that wears a studied smile,
Applauding coxcombs to beguile,
As *entre-chat* or *pirouette*
Doth “ *brava !* ” thunder'd loud, beget.
When Mary saw her vault in air,
Her snow-white tunic leaving bare
Her limbs—and heard that deafening shout
Grow louder as she twirl'd about,
With one leg pointing towards the sky,
As if the gallery to defy,
Surprised and shock'd she turn'd away,
Wondering how women ere could stay,
And thinking men must sure be frantic,
Who patronised such postures antic ;
She felt abash'd to meet the eye
Of every fop that loiter'd by ;
And, oh ! how rudely did it vex
Her fresh pure heart, to mark her sex
Thus outraged, while the noblest came
To gaze and revel in their shame.

Her troubled look the mother saw,
And rose, all pitying, to withdraw,
Convinced such shows must pain dispense
To one bred up in innocence.
But there was one who joy'd to see
The pure and shrinking modesty
Of this fair girl—'t was Deloraine !
Ah ! stands he at her side again ?
Yes, he now knows that there can be
No maid more innocent than she ;
And doth with pitying look survey
The bolder damsels pleased to stay
And watch what makes the indignant blush
Warm to his idol's forehead rush.

The races next—O, sport refined !
For women who pretend to mind—
Come in their turn ; but humdrum folks
Can miss “ the Derby ” or “ the Oaks.”
What, though the road to Epsom's lined
With crowds, and “ cabin'd, cribb'd, confined ”
Each carriage scarce can move along
Amid the dense and motley throng ;
And clouds of suffocating dust
Are borne by every fitful gust ;
And slang and curses—gentle notes !—
Are heard from silken-kerchief'd throats ;
And rude remarks, enough to raise
The blush of shame—if ever praise
Could mortify, it sure were here—
When men, the vilest, passing near,
Proclaim each highborn maid a “ gal,”
With half the points of Jane or Sal ;
And then tobacco's fume exhales,
To poison e'en the vernal gales.
The coronetted coach, with steeds
Such as our England only breeds,

Ploughs down the crowded road its way,
'Mid tax-cart, fly-van, buggy, dray,
The four-in-hand, from whose high seat
Each noble drives, with looks elate,
As if held the reins of state;
And flocks of men, and women too,
With nought but staring work to do,
And idle urchins, line the road
And by loud shouts the horses goad :
Such is the scene the route displays
To Epsom, on the appointed days,
When Fashion sends her votaries out
To mingle with the rabble rout.
The weather, too, propitious shines,
And all our climate's change combines ;
And showers, and wind, and dust, and sun,
Annoy us till the day be done.
Oh ! who the Races ever knew
To pass, and was not well soak'd through ?
Arrived, the stand each Lady seeks,
With crimson nose and purple cheeks,
Ringlets that all their curl have lost,
And robes and canezous sadly toss'd,
And bonnets that from Paris came,
So spoilt, who 'd know them for the same ?
As droop poor Nattier's faded flowers,
Pale victims to this clime of ours ;
Or hangs the twisted broken feather,
Attesting our uncertain weather.
The men behold the alter'd faces
Of belles who stood in their good graces ;
And some, intending to propose,
Draw off, alarm'd by ruby nose.
But Woman, ever prone to please,
Affects, although she feels not ease ;
For, half-suspecting she's a fright,
She tries to set her toilette right ;

And lisps, “ I hope *your* horse will win,”
To every beau that enters in :
While man, the gentler sex forgetting,
Remembers nothing but his betting,
Consults his book, takes three to two,
Then nods and hollas “ Done with you !”
'T is true he comes between the heats,
And wanders round the women's seats,
Till he has found the favour'd dame
For whom he feels or feigns a flame ;
And, by attentions somewhat free,
Leads cool spectators to agree
That “ he 's a devilish lucky fellow,”
Who' ll tell them all when he 's next mellow.
To mingle with this herd of men
Who thought of nought but horses then,
Our Mary felt was not her place,
And took no pleasure in the race.
But when she mark'd the women bet,
And more and more excited get,
With flushing cheek, and sparkling eye,
Whene'er a favourite's horse they spy,
And talk'd of odds to give or take,
Of Handicap, Match, or Sweepstake,
And saw their dainty fingers hold
Purses in which shone coins of gold,
Ready to pay in case of loss,
Though e'en the notion made them cross ;
Or heard them eager claim the cash,
Won from the losers, young and rash ;
She mark'd the scene with sad surprize,
And wish'd her sex more proud—more wise.

Now rise the shouts of races bawl'd,
And discord, falsely music call'd—
Vile organs, viler clarionets,
With cries of blacklegs offering bets ;

Shrill flutes, and shriller pipes of Pan,
And songs deserving censor's ban ;
" The horses, and their owners' names,"
At every side some knave proclaims ;
And cries of " Dorling's genuine card,"
From lungs stentorian ceaseless heard ;
While thimble-riggers boors entice,
And sharpers others tempt with dice ;
And execrations, loud and deep,
Are heard, as disappears the heap
Of coins of silver and of brass
Won from the coffers of each ass ;
And countless beggars ply their trade,
Whom practice long hath perfect made ;
And gipsy, chattering like a witch,
Foretells weak maidens husbands rich,
Prates of dark women and fair men,
Begs you 'll but cross her hands, and then
She 'll straight reveal your future fate,
Whether a coffin or a mate :
These mingled sounds produce such din,
That Mary feels, a realm to win,
Again she 'd not a race-course see,
And long'd—how long'd—at home to be !

And now the racers are led out,
And quick disperse the rabble rout ;
The generous steeds impatient stand,
While held in by their trainers' hand ;
Their coats how sleek, their limbs how fine !
England, what coursers equal thine ?
The jockeys, too, how trim, how neat !
How light each hand, how firm each seat !
The signal 's given, they start a pace
That promises a well-fought race :
They quicker move—now quicker still,
Round Tottenham corner ; see what skill

Each jockey shows to save his horse!
Now rapidly along the course
They dart like arrows from the bow,
And keep so near, that none can know
Which is the fleetest. Side by side
The pink and yellow rapid glide;
They're neck to neck; how far behind
The rest are left!—swift as the wind
They fly. Now yellow dashes past
The pink—the leader's now the last!
The yellow keeps ahead: he'll win—
He nears the goal—"He's in! he's in!"
A deafening shout now rends the air;
The winners laugh, the losers swear,
Whose feeling wives their salts prepare.
How pallid look their cheeks and brows!
How sullen seems each beaten spouse,
Reflecting he must soon "book up,"
And leave the victor, gold and cup!

A luncheon next the stand supplies,
Where chickens, *pâtés*, lamb, cold pies,
Tongues, lobster salads, hams, are all
Devour'd, till appetite doth pall;
And soda-water, and champagne,
Restore the losers' nerves again.
Those who, less favour'd, find no place
In the Grand Stand to see the race,
Feast on their dickeys, or in carriage;
And hungry gazers can't disparage
Their appetites, when e'en the fair
Lay in a meal to make one stare;
And sparkling eye, and deep-flush'd cheek,
Thy influence, brisk champagne! bespeak.
How glad was Mary, when, all over,
Seated beside her ardent lover,

She heard her mother, with remorse,
Regret the hours lost at the course ;
And, soon forgetting all around,
Her mind its native quiet found.

Time flew on gay on airy wing,
And Summer had replaced the Spring ;
No more in street and square were seen
The trees beclad in mantle green,
For now exhausted, dusty, brown,
They wore the livery of the town.
The grass, wherever grass was seen,
Resembled nought save wash'd nankeen ;
The shrubs, in spite of gardener's care,
Hung their limp boughs with dying air ;
No more the sickly window-roses
Had strength to charm the inmate's noses ;
And balconies in every street
With mignonette so lately sweet,
(A melancholy sight indeed !)
Show'd their whole treasure run to seed.
Now to the plague of mortal eyes
Began the carnival of flies ;
All London, still of Fashion full,
Sent up one groan—"How hot and dull !"

Now maidens bright begin to fear
They needs must wait another year
For that dear thing—establishment,
On which their eager hearts were bent ;
"So fleet to chase—so hard to find,
What ails the men? they grow so blind !"
And pretty lips, with smiles that shone,
Pout as their owners sit alone,
Viewing with dread the time approach,
When, pack'd in the ancestral coach,
To London's joys they bid adieu,
With long and dreary months in view !

Autumn and Winter spent at home,
Where but old stupid neighbours come—
The Rector and his prosy madam,
Whose pedigree dates back to Adam ;
The Doctor, with his gossip small,
So fond of luncheon at the Hall ;
The noisy, dull, and sporting Squire,
Splash'd to his waist in horrid mire ;
And then his loud red-elbow'd girls,
What feet ! what scarlet ears ! what curls !
Poor things ! devour'd with earnest passion
To know and ape the newest fashion—
What wonder maids would rather bear
With dusty streets and blazing air,
Than bid adieu to dear May Fair ?
Now mothers, too, with *soirées* sated,
Who hoped to see their daughters mated,
And deem'd their prey each sauntering beau,
Who, passing, notice chanced to show ;
Whose talk, however slow and *fade*,
Betwixt *quadrille* and *gallopade*
No cold repulse from them forbade ;
Are left—(the beaux all fled away),
With milliners' long bills to pay,
Which now come pouring in a number
To rob the matrons of their slumber,
While they can scarcely courage gather
To show them to a surly father
Too sure to swear—too sure to scoff—
“Five hundred pounds ! not one gone off !
Now truly, madam, on my word,
This cursed expense is quite absurd !”
And while on sleepless beds they toss,
Scared by the thoughts of husbands cross,
The anxious chaperons fret and wonder
Why men bend brows of darkest thunder

Upon the adornments which, no doubt,
No well-born girl could do without ;
And think some most malicious star
Takes pains their prospects bright to mar.
“Heavens! how my Lord will stamp and scold,
And hint that Dora looks so old!
And here's another season closed,
Sir Harry—gone, and *not* proposed!
I did my best—gave Sunday dinners,
Though strict Sir Andrew call'd us sinners!
I'm sure I caught three bad sore throats,
With water pic-nics made in boats:
Another year—and all but ruin!
Whatever *can* the men be doing?”

Now fathers on their bankers' book
With long and rueful visage look,
Sum the small balance, curse the town,
And, fill'd with sullen spleen, go down
To country-seats—to sleep, till Spring
Bids them again reluctant bring
Their wares, so long on hand, for sale,
And some, alas! grown *rather* stale!

While thus the weeks went quickly o'er,
His cabriolet each morning bore
Deloraine to meet the maid, who grew
Dearer the more he saw, and knew
The varied treasures of her mind,
By culture form'd, by taste refined;
He only waited just to know
If but the substance equall'd show—
For beauty he but little rated,
Unless by spirit animated;
And Deloraine, wiser than his age,
Must pause, before he dared engage
His faith to one but slightly known.
But all was right!—his wooed, his own,

Surpass'd what fondest fancy dream'd
Of pure and good—and now he deem'd
The experiment had well been tried,
And long'd to claim her for his bride !
But ere he spoke, and her fair hand
From her fond parents dared demand,
He long'd to seek if in her heart
His humble image had a part ;
At times depress'd, at times elate,
He now would dare and meet his fate.

There came a splendid carnival,
The season's last—a costume ball ;
And call'd as if by wizard's wand,
In garbs of many a distant land,
To grace that gorgeous revel, came
A host of charms—ah ! who could name
One half the beauty, rich and bright,
That shone on that last revel night ?
There many a youthful matron bore
Her store of gems—and sigh'd for more,
Yon fair sultana to eclipse,
With henna on her fingers' tips.
There in a snowy veil entangled,
Droop'd pensive Nun ; and next, half strangled
By garland, Perdita the fair—
And an Ophelia, with a stare
Of wonder, as she queried whether
'T was right to wear the heron feather,
That nodded, with each Scottish breath,
On her who stood for Queen Macbeth ?
In truth it was a pleasant sight
To meet, in noontide blaze of light,
The denizens of furthest lands,
From Asia's shores to Egypt's sands.
There prudes, with shrinking horror, saw
The beads and blanket of a Squaw ;

But ere their whisper'd blame began
To circle round, a murmur ran,
“How very droll!—a nice young man!”

There fair young Greeks in freedom stray'd,
With braided locks, and robes that play'd
In many a light and graceful fold,
And white brows bound with coins of gold;
The Turkish fair unveil'd were then
To the promiscuous gaze of men,
With such a wealth of raven hair,
And cheeks so radiant, brows so fair—
No wonder Sultans passing nigh
Eyed the fair groups, and wish'd to buy!

One dame—a daring feat I ween—
Wore the rich robes of Scotland's queen,
And loud and long was heard to sigh,
Whenever stately glided by
In harsh and formal majesty,
Her rival, with a well-starch'd ruff,
And robe of grand brocaded stuff.
There Anna Boleyn smiled elate,
Defying her approaching fate;
So blithe she look'd, the wise ones said
Before her time she'd lost her head;
While bluff King Harry, following after,
Thought her much younger than her daughter;
And she, the serious sweet Jane Grey,
Who better loved to read than play—
As Ascham tells us—danced as though
She took much pleasure in the show;
There with mantilla, flower, and fan,
And saucy page behind who ran,
And sour duenna in a hoop,
Came Spanish maids, a haughty group;
Behind them close, with charming song,
Did three Tyrolean sisters throng;

And in the *chaine* a Croat did turn
 A pretty black-capp'd maid of Berne;
 Three nuns demure—press'd hard by railers
 (Fresh-water though)—a pair of sailors;
 A *Hollandaise* contrasted well
 With a Savoyard—his *vielle*
 Slung at his back—and when he play'd,
 Ye Gods! what doleful noise he made!
 And Naples sent her peasants there,
 With sparkling eyes and jetty hair,
 And dresses dight with colours gay,
 Such as at *festas* they display.
 Thus, once resistless, moved along
 Bright MALIBRAN, that Queen of Song!
 They little thought, who pass'd her by,
 And marvell'd at her mirthful eye,
 So full of life and joy was she,
 That soon the tomb her home must be!

And Roman ladies, chaste and proud,
 Were mingled in that motley crowd;
 And witching gipsies fortunes told,
 The same one theme to young and old;
 And pilgrims with their cockle-shells;
 And Folly with his cap and bells;
 And Comus with his cup divine;
 And Circe, but without her swine;
 And she who on the willowy shore (1)
 Of Carthage did her love deplore:
 The Muse lacks breath; she can no more.
 Through the vast hall the brilliant crowd
 Roam'd gaily, or to music loud
 Whirl'd nimble feet, while some apart
 Reveal'd soft secrets of the heart;

(1) ——— “ On such a night
 Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
 Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
 To come again to Carthage.”

Full many a fair and dimpled lisper
Lent her white ear to Flattery's whisper,
And though in Love's experience read,
Believed the whole the coxcomb said :
'T was almost true—if true not quite—
And who could doubt on such a night ?

Who on this brilliant scene had dwelt,
And paused to think, but must have felt
As Xerxes, when he wept to see
That mighty moving throng, whom he
Had marshall'd on to destiny,
This crowd of young, and blithe, and fair,
Smiled on by Death—but not to spare ?
To his wan eye the gilded room
Was but a thickly-peopled tomb ;
To him the years are but a day
That pass, and all have gone their way,
Or, touch'd by Time with finger cold,
Are frail and spectral to behold ;
He laughs at every polish'd brow,
And floating tress, and neck of snow,
And cheek that shames the rarest rose,
And lips that rows of pearl disclose,
And forms from Beauty's faultless mould,
So softly fair or proudly bold,
That seraphs, from their amaranth bowers,
Might envy shapes this earth of ours
Yields from its dust ;—and while he quaffs
His wine of tears, the spoiler laughs,
Too soon that shadowy wand to wave,
Which sweeps the revellers to the grave !
But O ! how few e'er pause to think,
While Pleasure's cup, fill'd to the brink,
Lures them to taste—and idly gay,
Their brief existence sport away ;
Until, perchance, some dear one dies,
Then falls the bandage from their eyes,

That hid the dread truth from their gaze,
And, terror-struck, in wild amaze,
They learn that nought of man's endeavour
Can change the doom—"Ye part for ever!"
For ever?—No—in realms on high,
If the heart's instinct prove no lie...
But pause—nor trench on themes divine,
Unmeet for such light lay as mine.

Mark yonder youth, on whose fond arm
Leans one enrich'd with every charm
That ever bounteous Nature spent,
When on some loving labour bent!
How fresh, how young, how fair the face!
That form, how round, how full of grace!
That foot, how fairy-like and small!
It might on bed of roses fall,
And scarce a delicate leaflet crush,
Nor by its pressure stain the blush:
A sable robe, in graceful folds,
Sweeps to her feet—a cestus holds
Her slender waist, with many a gem
Brilliant; so shines the diadem
That crowns her brow, as marble pale,
Whence low descends a dusky veil
Round her sweet face in shadowy flow,
Like clouds that float o'er Dian's brow;
Now her rare splendour half concealing,
Now, touch'd by air, the whole revealing—
"She walks in beauty," Queen of Night,
Did e'er the goddess look more bright?
Large diamonds of the purest lustre
Within her raven tresses cluster,
Which darker seem between the rays
Emitted by their dazzling blaze;
So show the heavens when stars abound,
And shed their sparkling beams around,

Her veiled arms (might Fancy say)
Remind us of the milky way,
When in the winter's midnight sky
Its lone long path streams pale on high.
All eyes are on her, but her own
Are veil'd, as though the lids had grown
Jealous of those bright orbs they shade,
And to reveal them half afraid.
Why wears her cheek a brighter hue
Than Cashmere's gardens ever knew?
Why throbs that fair and gentle breast
So wildly 'gainst her starry vest?
Would she abash'd those gazers shun?
She hears—she sees—she feels but one!

At last, the chosen at her side
Hath ask'd her to become his bride;
Hath told not half the manly love
Which all his future life shall prove;
And every tender timid word
Her ears have drunk—her heart hath heard.
Yet maiden shame would half repress
The words her blushing cheeks confess,
Fond thoughts she dares not all express.
“Look up, mine own! a word—a sign—
To tell me you are ever mine;
Nay, are you pain'd, that thus you sigh,
And listen with averted eye?
Say—may I hope?”—O! who can tell
The rapture on his soul which fell,
When those twin faltering lips betray'd
The “Yes” of that dear conscious maid?
Scarcely his joy he can dissemble,
The while he felt her round arm tremble
Within his own, as to his breast,
Gently, but lovingly, 't was press'd.

And she—O ! who could e'er disclose
 The deep tumultuous bliss she knows ?
 She longs to be alone, to weep
 The tears she scarce conceal'd can keep.
 Now, bolder grown, the ardent youth
 Repeats his vows of faith and truth,
 Till, all disclosed, the maid may own
 The secret, by her blushes shown.
 At last—for Time, who jealous hovers
 O'er mortal raptures, spares not lovers—
 He leads her to her mother's chair,
 And whispers (not to empty air)
 How high his bliss, how great his pride,
 To call her angel-daughter bride ;
 Smiling, the lady hears the news,
 She could not parley or refuse ;
 Yet dignified the gracious mien
 In which she let assent be seen.
 'T was fix'd next morning he should call
 And tell the good Lord Percy all ;
 No fear of him—he could not say
 To Mary and Lord Deloraine “ Nay ! ”
 Pass we the interim in our song—
 O, but the lovers thought it long !
 'T were vain to tell how quickly flew
 The hours which now the lovers knew,
 As, ne'er apart, they rode or walk'd,
 Or of the golden future talk'd,
 For even old age looks passing bright,
 When view'd by Love's own magic light ;
 Or how the self-same poet's page
 Would oft their downcast eyes engage—
 The bard who sung the “ hell (1) of sueing,”
 Forgot, methinks, the heaven of wooing !

(1) “ What hell it is in sue ng long to bide ! ”

SPENSER'S *Mother Hubbard's Tale*.

Now Deloraine blamed the law's delay,
And drove to Lincoln's Inn each day,
To urge its ministers to speed,
Who of impatience took small heed.
They wasted weeks, without remorse,
Their tedious covenants to endorse ;
Talk'd of fee-simple and entail,
And due provisions for heirs-male
And younger children, and made good
Jointure in case of widowhood—
Nay, so o'er provident were they,
As with shrewd counsel long to weigh
What sum, in case of separation,
Should form the lady's reparation.
The youth to fancy did begin
That Time stood still in Lincoln's Inn ;—
He'd wait no more, but spoke aloud,
And, angry with impatience, vow'd
He'd rather give his whole estate
Than for the tedious lawyers wait.
Cold to his prayers, those parchment men
The pin-money must settle then.

But all, at last, was finish'd well—
Now of the thousand gifts to tell,
When father, mother, lover, vied
Which should the most enrich the bride !
Diamonds, the costliest and the rarest,
Pearls of the East, the largest, fairest—
How proud had Egypt's royal Queen,
In her triumphant glory, been
To drink such ocean-spoils, as now
Waited to hang on Mary's brow !—
Rubies that flash'd like the red sun
When Earth he latest looks upon ;
Emeralds, whose deep and lucid green
Would shame the fairies' turf, I ween ;

And sapphires, of such hues intense
As Midnight's heaven had dropp'd them thence ;
And turquoises of paler hue—
Fond Memory's flower hath such a blue ;
And opals of such changeful dyes
As rainbows show in summer skies,
Were shower'd on her, whose beauty rare,
Surpass'd all gems beyond compare.
And now arrived the time to show
Her gorgeous and complete *trousseau*—
Crowds flock'd to Regent Street each day,
Enchanted with the rich display
Which Howell's taste and skill provide,
To deck this young and peerless bride,
And many a maiden's tempted eye
Made her young heart for wedlock sigh.
What Cashmere shawls !—why, for one glance,
Had cross'd the sea the flower of France !
Even English dames (the truth to speak)
Dream'd of them many an after-week,
And raved in ecstasy's disorder,
About “ that matchless Turkish border ! ”
Robes of each fashion, stuff, and shade,
In dazzling number were display'd ;
With *peignoirs*, white as snows which arch
The weeping branches of the larch ;
Chapeaux and caps outpassing number—
Some for the morning, some for slumber ;
Furs from Siberia—mart Zipline,
Nor Czar nor Kaiser e'er had seen
Finer ; and ermine, soft and white
As flakes of snow, ere they alight
On earth ; and shoes, which Cinderella
In her glass shoe had found no fellow ;
Muslins from Dacca's cunning looms ;
Velvets and satins, with such blooms

As, shown in garden-walks, would quite
With envy turn the peaches white !
And then *such* hues !—less changeful deck
The monarch of the bee-birds' (1) neck ;
Not Juno, when she dress'd a cloud,
To cheat the vacant youth who bow'd
To its false charms, chose tints more gay
Than, flower-like, in that *trousseau* lay.

But who the treasures e'er could tell
Disposed within the rich *corbeille* ?
Embroider'd kerchiefs white and fine,
Their lace had made Arachne pine,
Or, desperate grown in weaver's pride,
Resolve on doleful suicide !
And veils were there, in which the bride
Might her too-glowing blushes hide ;
With scarfs and lappets, ruffles, frills—
A mine 't would take to pay their bills !
And *point d'Alençon*, too, was there ;
And Mechlin, that made ladies stare ;
With Valenciennes so very fine—
They said for trimming 't was divine ;
French gloves in *sachets*, whose perfume
Lends fragrance to the dressing-room ;
With artificial flowers by Nardin,
Vying with those that grown in garden ;
Fans, smelling-bottles, casolets,
The gazers call'd them " perfect pets !"
Enrich'd with gems of every dye
Golconda's glittering mines supply ;
Purses and *reticules* most rare,
Her gold and handkerchief to bear :—
No wonder that the spinsters sigh'd,
When such a store as this they eyed !

(1) The king of the humming-birds—remarkable among that gay tribe for the brilliancy of his plumage.

All done—all ready—nought remains
For Mary now, save Hymen's chains,
Or garlands rather ; if by Love
They're forged, they ne'er can galling prove ;
No hapless captive sure is she,
Who dreads even dreams which set her free.
And yet, when nothing now remains,
Save to put on those rosy chains,
To leave a father—O, how dear !
To feel a mother's falling tear,
When, strain'd to her o'erflowing heart,
She finds 't is very hard to part !
For one brief instant, tearful, fond,
She does not view the home beyond,
But trembles as her feet press on
Towards that strange solemn Rubicon !
Then rise most tender thoughts of youth,
The unsleeping love, the unshaken truth,
In those so honour'd and so loved,
So often tried, so largely proved,
Till all the daughter's heart is moved !

Yes, even for a husband's arms,
And his ancestral home, whose charms,
Painted by him—she long'd to see,
O, bitter must such partings be !
But soon 't is promised they shall meet,
And Deloraine whispers 't will be sweet
To welcome to *her* stately home
Those much-loved parents when they come.
Gently he dries her gushing tears,
And feels how much such grief endears ;
And soon her sadness can beguile,
Until there dawns a happier smile
Round her fresh lips : to add the grace
Of gladness to her pensive face,

He tells her, ere the autumn fades,
He'll lead her to her native shades,
Make friends with every field and tree,
By her beloved since infancy !
Soothed by his words, and calmer grown,
At last the bridal hour comes on.

And now, in spotless garb array'd,
Was never seen a fairer maid ;
Her parents gaze with tearful pride,
Her lover longs to call her bride ;
And while the altar she draws nigh,
She checks the tear and trembling sigh,
And with religious awe doth feel
The solemn bond she comes to seal !
She utters not, like words of course,
The vows that wedlock's laws enforce ;
With holy fervour doth she speak
Each word, and with a spirit meek
Resolves their purpose to fulfil,
Obedient to the Almighty's Will !

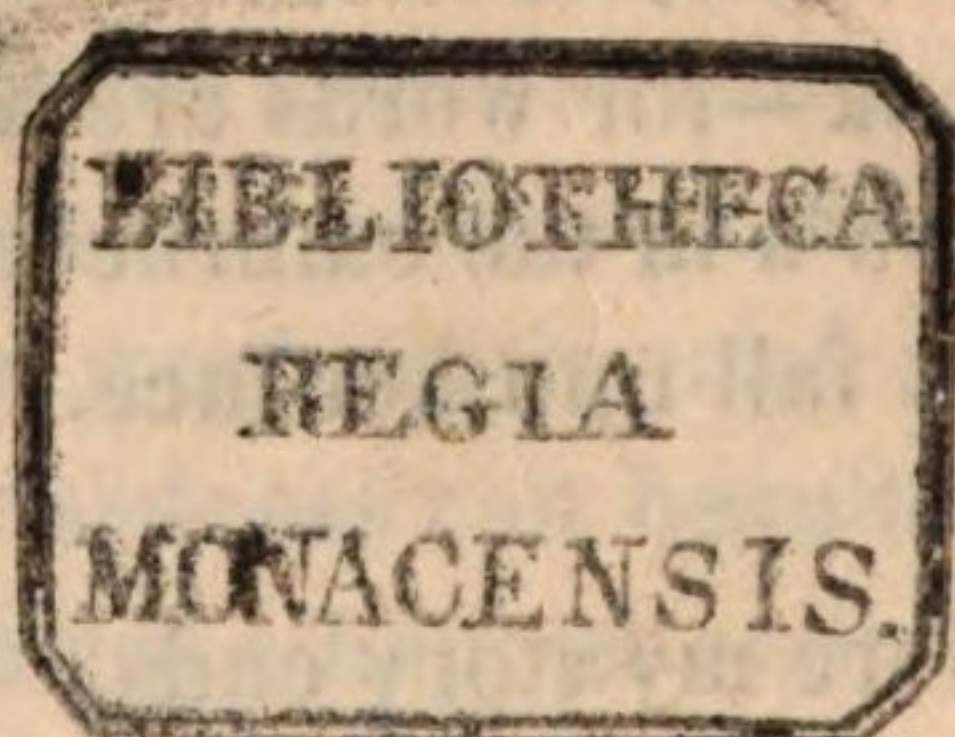
The Bishop now the bride has bless'd,
Her husband now her lips hath press'd ;
Her friends flock round, and wish the pair
May all life's joys and blessings share :
Her mother tries to hide a tear,
And still her father hovers near
Once more to bless, once more to speak ;
He can but look—for words are weak,—
But a life's love's in the embrace,
And tears that fall upn her face.

And now, before my story ends,
A sumptuous *déjeûner* attends
The happy couple and their friends.

'T is done : behold approach the door
A well-appointed chaise-and-four :
More tasteful never left Long Acre.
What wonder ?—Barker was the maker.
The bride, attired in travelling-dress,
Meets once, once more, the sad caress
Of parents, who with breaking heart,
Behold their mansion's flower depart.
They 'd keep her still.—In vain ! for marriage
Were nought without its travelling-carriage.

And now my Muse disdains to tune
Her tired harp for the honey-moon :
The wooing past—the wedding o'er—
Paid every fee—what would ye more ?
True wishes, lovely maids, and kind,
That such a lot you each may find ;
And every belle have equal reason
To bless the closing of the Season !

THE END.



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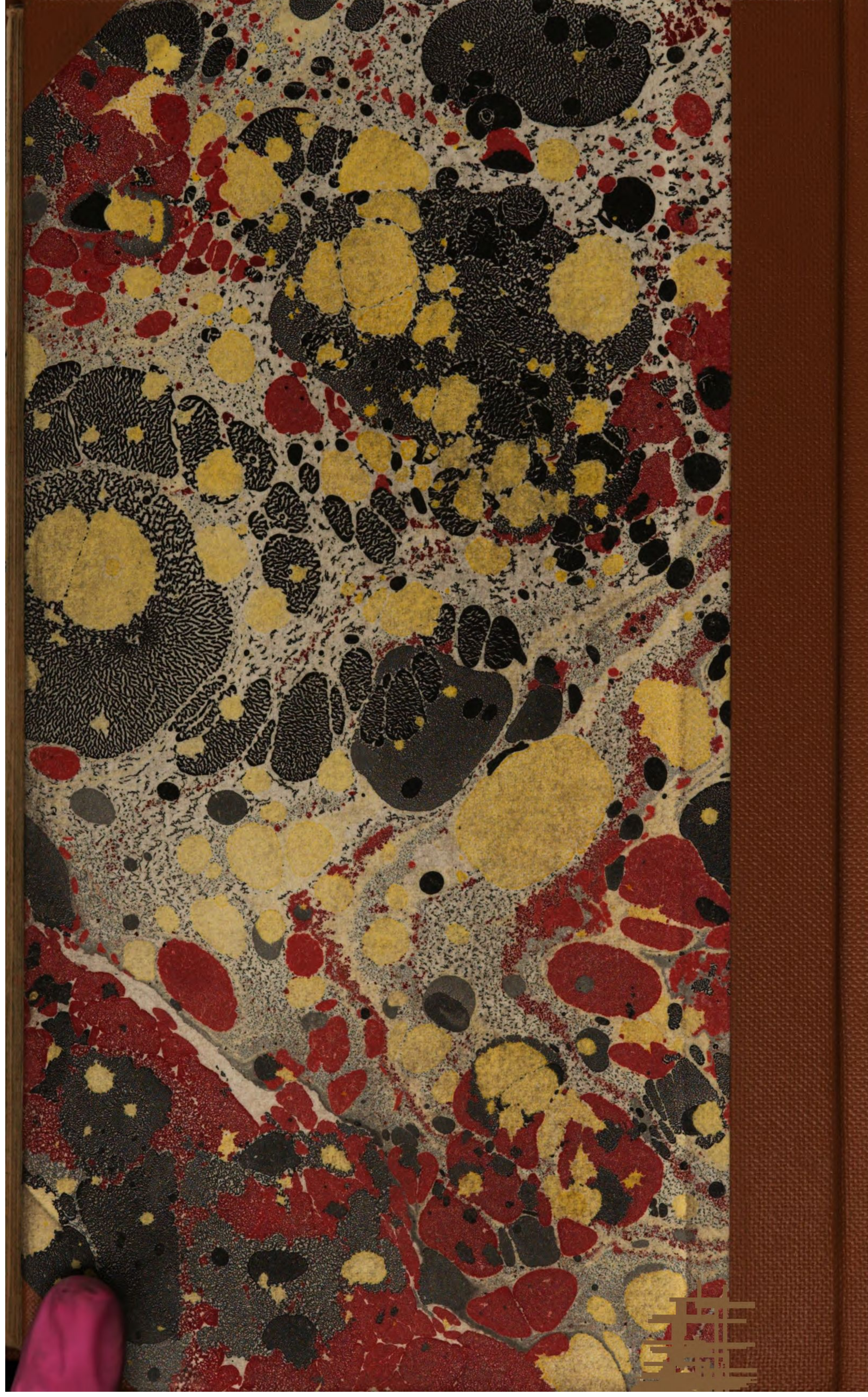
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Blessington, Marguerite

The Governess and the Belle of a Season

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